

# *Life of Gladstone*



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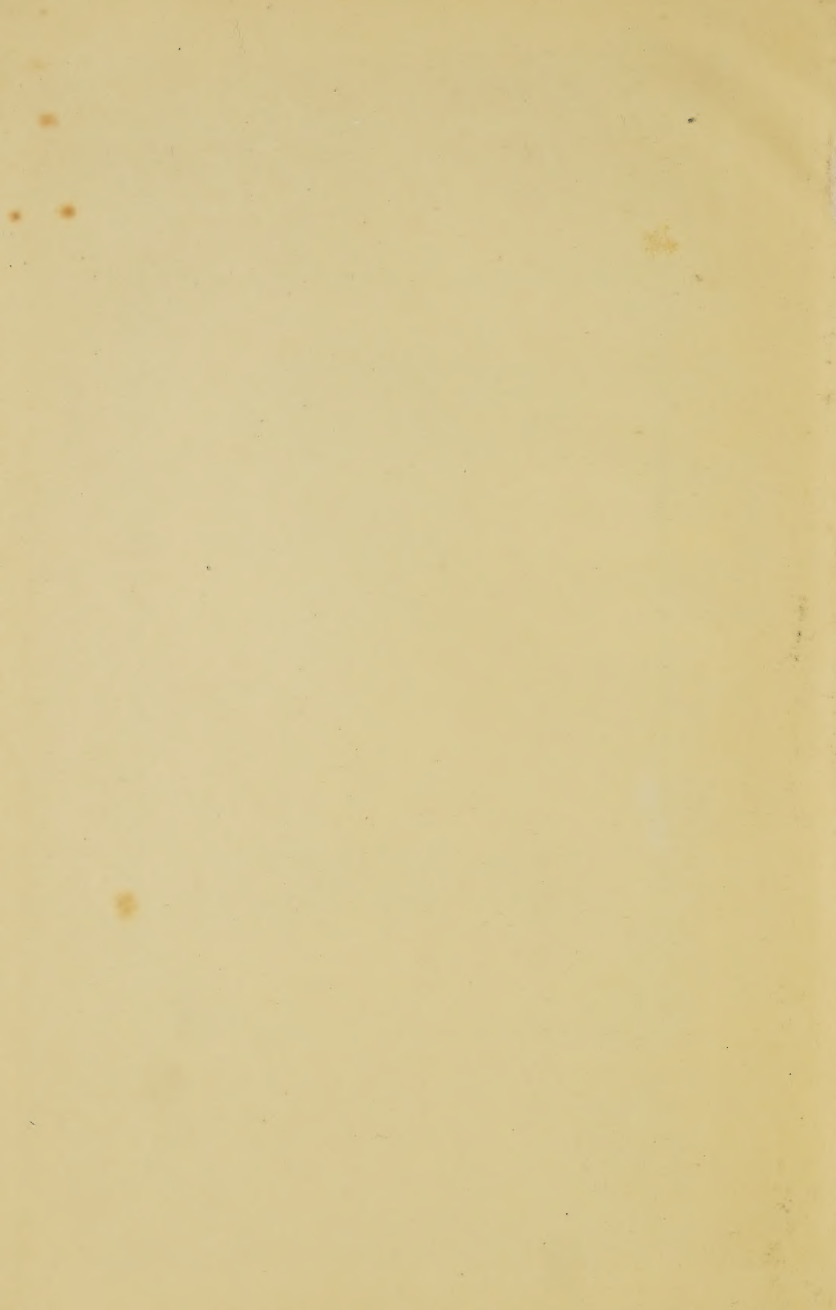
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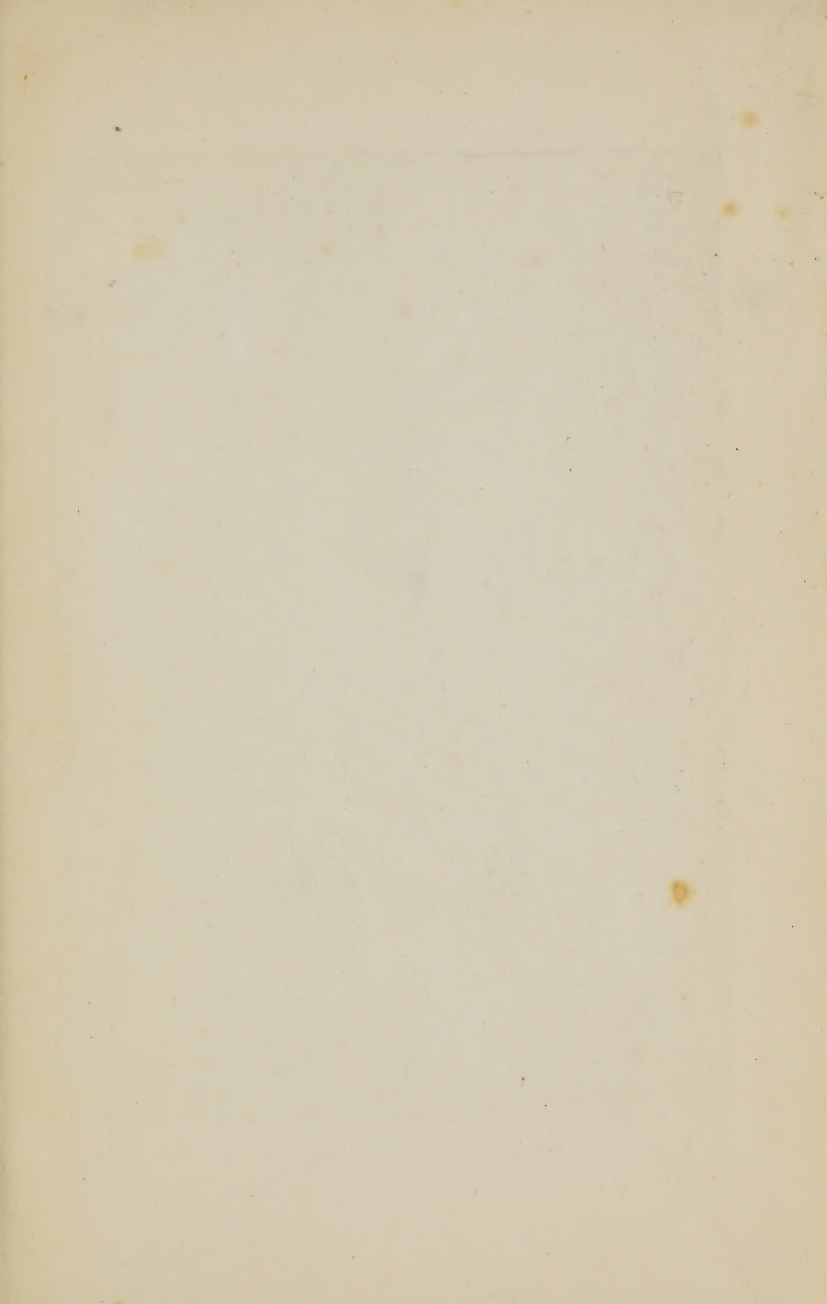
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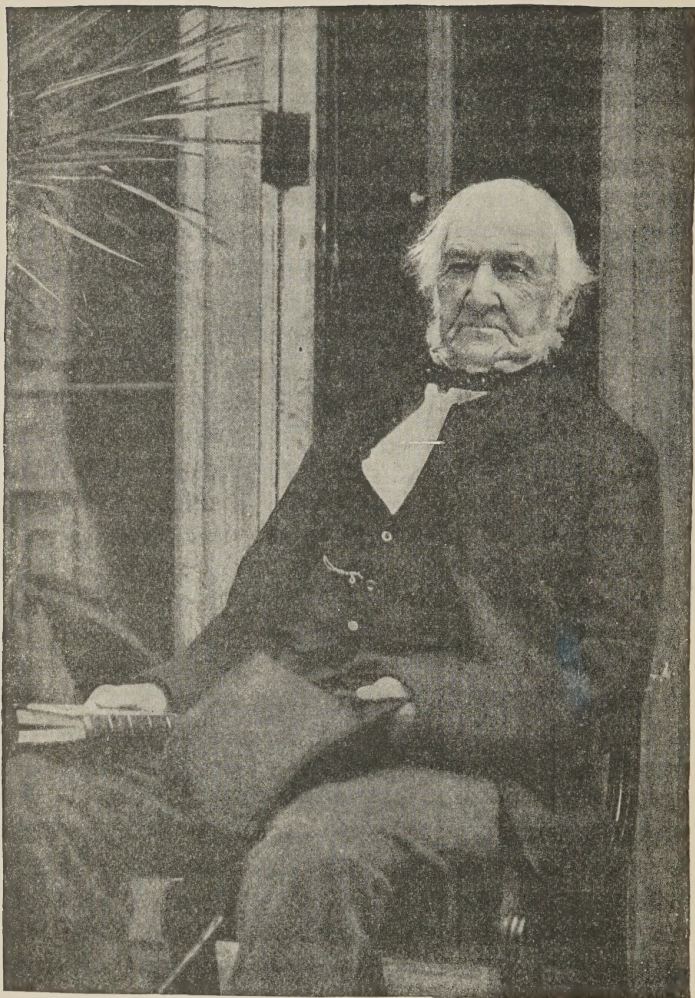
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WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE.

# LIFE OF GLADSTONE

*A Book for Boys*

BY

M. B. SYNGE

*Author of "Brave Men and Brave Deeds," "A Helping Hand,"*

*"A Child of the Mews," "Jem's Wife,"*

*&c. &c.*




THOMAS NELSON AND SONS

*London, Edinburgh, and New York*

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1899





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# LIFE OF GLADSTONE.

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## CHAPTER I.

### *WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE.*

“ One who never turned his back, but marched breast forward ;  
Never doubted clouds would break ;  
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph ;  
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,  
Sleep to wake.”—BROWNING.

ON Ascension Day 1898 a brave man passed from our midst. He was one of the bravest of the brave—a man of magnificent courage ; one, indeed, who never turned his back, but marched breast forward—who did what he thought to be right, absolutely regardless of the consequences.

William Ewart Gladstone was indeed no coward. From the days when, as a little Eton boy, he tried to stop cruelty to the pigs at the annual fair, to the days when he lay “ stricken and bruised,” with the strength of an old lion, bearing excruciating pain without a murmur, he had faced life with all the courage of his manhood.

“ Manhood ” was always one of his favourite words. Happy indeed the man of whom Mr. Gladstone could say, “ He has the manhood to do this ; ” unforgettable

the utter scorn with which he cried bitterly, "He had not the manhood to do it."

His passion for justice was equal to his courage; he could not bear to see oppression in any form. It was injustice to Bulgaria that roused him from his retirement at Hawarden; it was injustice to Ireland that made him fight his great fight for Home Rule, even through defeat and failure. It was ever his great aim, to use his own well-known words, "to follow the bright star of justice, beaming brightly from the heavens, whithersoever it might lead."

His justice was tempered by mercy and pity; he had that "fierceness that from tenderness is never far," a magnetic power of sympathy which made him feel the sufferings of others as if they were his own. When the unexpected news of Cetewayo's death reached Mr. Gladstone, it was from human sympathy he said at once, "Poor old man, I am very sorry for him!" although his death solved a very complicated situation in the country.

"Well, Mr. Gladstone, you are the only man in England who *is* sorry," cried his exasperated informer.

"Do it with all thy might," was ever the principle of his life. He would throw himself as heartily into mastering some apparently unimportant detail of his Budgets as he would to cutting down his trees at Hawarden.

"If a boy run, he ought to run as fast as he can; if he jump, he should jump as far as he can; whatever you do, do it with all your might," he once said, addressing a group of schoolboys. And he not only preached but practised these things.

But perhaps the most striking part of the man was his religion.

"The faith of Mr. Gladstone," said Lord Rosebery, paying his beautiful tribute to his chief in the House of Lords, "pervaded every act and every part of his life. It was the faith, the pure faith of a child, confirmed by the experience and the conviction of manhood." It shaped his conduct, it controlled his thoughts, it guided his life. He made no secret of it, neither did he parade it, but he never forgot it.

He has shown us emphatically, what this nineteenth century is at times slow to acknowledge, that it is possible for a good man to be a great man, a clever man, and a brave man.

Mr. Gladstone had his faults, and they were palpable; but as a modern poet reminds us, "His greatness, not his littleness, concerns mankind." And the "generations still to come through many long years will look for encouragement in labour, for fortitude in adversity, for the example of a splendid Christianity, a constant hope and constant encouragement, to the pure, the splendid, the dauntless figure of William Ewart Gladstone."

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## CHAPTER II.

### *CHILDHOOD.*

"Born, nurtured of the people; living still  
The people's life; and, though their noblest flower,  
In naught removed above them, save alone  
In loftier virtue, wisdom, courage, power."—WATSON.

WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE was born four days after Christmas, at 62 Rodney Street, Liverpool, in 1809.

His father was one of the great merchant princes of England, who had made his fortune on a West Indian

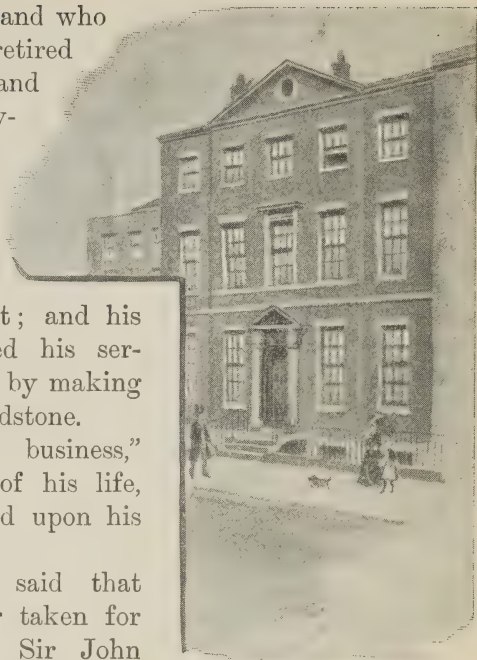


sugar plantation, and who now, having retired with wealth and honour, was giving his services to the town of his adoption. He had been elected a Member of Parliament; and his country recognized his services in later life by making him Sir John Gladstone.

"Diligent in business," was the motto of his life, and this he urged upon his children.

It has been said that nothing was ever taken for granted between Sir John Gladstone and his sons; they discussed topics great and small with rare eagerness and interest. Each boy was put on his mettle to defend his own case or to damage the case of another, all with the greatest good-humour and enjoyment. They would debate as to whether the trout should be boiled or broiled, whether a window should be open or shut, whether the chances were in favour of the weather being fine or wet.

One day one of the Gladstone boys knocked down a wasp with his handkerchief, and was about to crush it on the table, when his father started the question as to whether he had the right to kill the insect. The



HOUSE WHERE MR. GLADSTONE  
WAS BORN.

point was discussed as seriously as if a human life were at stake. When at last it was decided that the wasp deserved death, because it was a trespasser in the drawing-room, a common enemy, and a danger, it was found that the insect had crawled from under the handkerchief, and was buzzing away as if in mockery of its death-warrant.

It was acknowledged that in these arguments young William Gladstone was mostly victorious; his "tongue-fencing" was wonderful, and his father would cry delightedly, "Hear, hear! well said, well put, Willie," when the boy had scored a point.

So much for William Gladstone's father. His mother was a Scotch lady, from Stornoway.

When, in 1812, Canning fought a famous election in Liverpool, Sir John Gladstone threw himself heart and soul into the cause of the great Minister. It was from the balcony of 62 Rodney Street that Canning addressed the enthusiastic crowd that hailed him Member for Liverpool. The little William Ewart was only three years old at the time, but he remembered looking out with wondering eyes on the excited crowd below.

"I was bred under the shadow of the great name of Canning, and every influence connected with that great name governed the politics of my childhood and of my youth," he said in after years.

When he was four years old, he was taken by his mother to see Mrs. Hannah More, an old lady of no small celebrity. She took a great fancy to little "Billy Gladstone," as she called him, and presented him with one of her books, because, she said, he had just come into the world and she was just going out!—though, it may be added, she did not go out of the world for

eighteen years after this, dying just a few months before her little "Billy Gladstone" first became a Member of Parliament.

After some teaching at the vicarage of Seaforth, where Arthur Stanley, afterwards Dean of Westminster, was among his fellow-pupils, William Gladstone left home for Eton, where his two elder brothers already were. He is said to have been the "prettiest little boy that ever went to Eton." Be this as it may, he certainly was one of the cleverest.



*"She presented him with one of her books."*

One of the few stories existing about his school life at Eton was told by himself, when he was over seventy, in one of his Scottish speeches. He was explaining the word intimidation.

"I will tell you a story," he said to the listening crowds, "though it a little reflects upon myself. I remember when I was a boy at Eton—I am sorry to say that English boys, and perhaps Scotch boys too, are



sometimes very wanton and inconsiderate in the tricks they play. I remember perfectly well that the lady in whose house we were boarded—we called her the dame—had one or two little children, and I am ashamed to say that we got possession of the housemaid's brush with which they swept the floor; we held that brush upside down, we clothed the shoulders of the brush with a very large cloak, and we mounted over the shoulders a most hideous mask; and having thereby constructed a very formidable figure, we paraded this figure in the face of the little children of the dame, and you may judge that they were horrified. This is intimidation, gentlemen!"

William Gladstone was twelve years old when he went to Eton. The other stories of his school days are a good deal more to his credit than this one.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### *SCHOOL LIFE.*

"Oh, this boy  
Lends metal to us all."—SHAKESPEARE.

ETON COLLEGE stands under the very shadow of Windsor Castle, amid some of the most beautiful scenery in all England. The school and its surroundings impressed itself deeply on the mind of the little school-boy, and all his life long he became fired with enthusiasm at the bare mention of Eton.

When, fifty-seven years later, he returned to address some young Etonians, he said: "My attachment to Eton increases with the lapse of years. It is the queen of schools!"

What wonder, then, that Eton boys stood with arms reversed and heads bent low as one of the greatest of Etonians was borne past them to his last resting-place in Westminster Abbey?

He seems to have worked hard as a student, both in and out of school hours, which, when all told, hardly exceeded eleven hours a week. There was no teaching of mathematics, so the young scholar devoted his half-holidays to teaching himself.



ENTRANCE TO ETON COLLEGE FIFTY YEARS AGO.

He took part in the cricket and football of the school without distinguishing himself at them. His favourite recreation was walking; he was always a great walker. He walked very fast, and went long distances. To roam about the lovely country with a few boys of his own age and tastes was his ideal way of spending his leisure.

He was fond of sculling on the river, and kept his own boat.

"When I was at Eton," he has told us, "I sculled

constantly—more than almost any other boy in the school. Our boats were not so light as they are now, but they went along merrily, with no fear of getting them under water.”

The story of how he stood forth boldly as champion of some wretched pigs at Eton is well known.



*“He openly denounced the boys.”*

It was Ash Wednesday, and the Eton boys had a barbarous custom of hustling the drovers at the annual fair, and then chopping off the tails of the pigs. Young William Gladstone—he was a Fifth Form boy at the time—could not bear to see such wanton cruelty

practised on dumb animals. He openly denounced the boys who had been guilty of it! The following Ash Wednesday he found three newly-amputated pigs' tails hanging in a bunch on his door, with a paper bearing this inscription :—

“ Quisquis amat porcos, porcis amabitur illis ;  
Cauda sit exemplum ter repetita tibi.”

Gladstone challenged the boys who had done this to come forth, and he would answer them “in good round hand upon their faces ;” but as a boy he was a tough foe to deal with, and his invitation met with no response.

It must have been a proud moment in young Gladstone's life when Canning came to Eton one fourth of June, and found time for a talk with the son of his old friend and supporter. His advice to the boy on this occasion was long remembered. “Give plenty of time to your verses,” he said, among other things. “Every good copy you do will set in your memory some poetical thought or well-turned form of speech which you will find useful when you speak in public.” It was Canning's visit and conversation that gave Gladstone the idea of editing a magazine at Eton ; and in *The Eton Miscellany*, as it was called, some of his restless energy found vent.

In this he wrote largely himself, sometimes poetry, sometimes prose. An able article on Eloquence showed how fascinated he was, even at this time, by debates in the House of Commons.

Was he, boy-like, dreaming even now of a successful Parliamentary career ?

His first poem was in praise of the schoolboy's hero, Richard Cœur de Lion.

“Who foremost now?” asks the young Etonian—

“Who foremost now the deadly spear to dart,  
And strike the jav’lin to the Moslem’s heart?  
Who foremost now to climb the leaguered wall,  
The first to triumph or the first to fall?”

The boy Gladstone seems to have exercised an influence for good on those around him. “I was a thoroughly idle boy,” said one of his school-fellows, who afterwards became Bishop of Salisbury; “but I was saved from worse things by getting to know Gladstone.”

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## CHAPTER IV.

### *AT OXFORD.*

“You have life, therefore you have a law of life. To develop yourselves, to act and live according to your law of life, is your first, or rather your sole duty.”—MAZZINI.

YOUNG Gladstone carried with him a reputation for industry, and a name for being at once very high-principled and religious. Wherever he went, people were conscious that a rare personality was among them, and young men were ready to follow his lead, relying on his superior strength.

In these days, great stress was laid, at the university, on a knowledge of the Bible. This suited the young scholar’s serious bent of mind, and he determined to throw aside the study of mathematics altogether.

He wrote to his father telling him of his decision. His father wrote back that he had received this news with much grief; for his own part, he did not think a man was a man unless he knew mathematics. Young Gladstone had a great idea of obedience to parents:



he gave up his own plan, and set to work on mathematics, in which he greatly distinguished himself. And he used to say, in after years, that he would never have been Chancellor of the Exchequer, if it had not been for his studying mathematics to please his father.

At this time, too, theology attracted him powerfully, and he had a great wish to go into the church. But here, again, he was strongly opposed by his father, who



CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD.

wished to see him a politician. Again Gladstone reluctantly but loyally obeyed. And thus, yielding his own wishes to those of his father, he became a leader of the House of Commons, even Prime Minister.

His industry at Oxford was proverbial. He never allowed anything to interfere with his morning's reading—a rule which, in those lax days at the universities, required some courage to carry out. He read for four hours, and then usually took a walk, his chosen friends

being mostly of an industrious bent like himself. He was greatly laughed at for mixing with a set of men "only fit to live with maiden aunts and keep tame rabbits."

But Gladstone knew what he was about: he turned a deaf ear to ridicule, and went straight forward.

His perseverance sometimes bothered even his best friends. He would start for a walk to some place eight miles or so distant, and make up his mind to go "at least more than half-way." Rain might fall in torrents—a serious matter in those days when no undergraduate ever carried an umbrella—but this would not shake him from his purpose; until he had passed his fourth mile-post, no power on earth would turn him back.

It was this dogged perseverance that enabled him to carry through so much reform, despite all obstacles, later in life.

In his second term he joined the Oxford Union. On February 11, 1830, he made his maiden speech. A reputation for eloquence and brilliance was at once established by the young undergraduate. He was afterwards made secretary, and ultimately president, of the Union, and as such he made his famous speech against the Reform Bill then before the House of Commons.

"When Mr. Gladstone sat down, we all felt that an epoch in our lives had occurred. It certainly was the finest speech of his that I ever heard," said one enthusiastic member; while others predicted that the young Christ Church undergraduate would one day rise to be Prime Minister of England!

Thus passed away his three years at Oxford. He crowned his career by taking a double first-class.

He left behind him a name for high living and an example of temperance. He lived at a time when wine was drunk very freely among undergraduates, more than was good either for them or for their purses. Young Gladstone was very moderate in his use of wine; even at Eton he was known to have turned his glass down rather than drink to a coarsely-suggested toast. And it is said that undergraduates at Oxford were more sober and careful in the "forties" because Gladstone had set an example in the "thirties."

And so he passed out to a larger world, where his undoubted abilities should have a wider scope, and the high qualities which were developing so rapidly should be appreciated by his countrymen, who know full well how to appreciate the elements of greatness.

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## CHAPTER V.

### *MEMBER FOR NEWARK.*

"On whose burning tongue truth, peace, and freedom hung."

MOORE.

"Far off the promise of his coming shone."

LEAVING Oxford, Gladstone hurried off to Italy, where he spent six happy months, learning to love his Dante, studying art, and delighting in the natural beauties of the land, whose stanch friend he was to become in after years.

It was with mingled feelings that he hurried back to England, in response to an invitation from the Duke of Newcastle, to contest the town of Newark in the Tory interest; for at this time Mr. Gladstone was the stanchest of Tories.

The Duke had heard great things of the young undergraduate from his son, who had been his school-fellow at Eton and his friend at Oxford.

"Who is this Mr. Gladstone?" asked those whose votes were asked for him.

"He is the son of the friend of Mr. Canning, the great Liverpool merchant," was the answer; "but he has won golden opinions from all sorts of people, and promises to be an ornament to the House of Commons."

"I shall be very glad if he gets in—the old W. E. G.," wrote his friend Arthur Hallam not long before his death; "we want such men as that."

The contest was fought out with great spirit, and when it closed, Mr. Gladstone was returned at the head of the poll. There was great rejoicing, for his character was well known, and even a political opponent was moved to write of him,—

"His was no tongue which meanly stooped to wear  
The guise of virtue, while his heart was bare;  
But all he thought through ev'ry action ran;  
God's noblest work—I've known one honest man!"

It was on January 29, 1833, that the young Member for Newark took his seat for the first time in that House which he was destined to delight and astonish through more than half a century.

He was at this time a tall, vigorous-looking young man, with strongly-marked features, pale complexion, abundance of almost black hair, and piercing, dark eyes. These were, perhaps, his most remarkable feature: age turned the thick, black hair to a silvery white, the pale complexion became yet paler, but age never seemed to dim the "silent, splendid anger of his eyes."

It was four months before he made his first speech in the House. It was looked forward to with unfeigned interest by the members. Accustomed to riding, it was Gladstone's habit to ride in the Park every morning when he was in London. This was the seventeenth of May, and the young man made a noticeable figure on



*"A noticeable figure on his grey Arab mare."*

his grey Arab mare, his "hat, narrow-brimmed, high upon the centre of his head, sustained by a crop of thick, curly hair."

"That is Gladstone," said a passer-by to a young member. "He is to make his maiden speech to-night. It will be worth hearing."

Curiously enough, this speech was against any sudden



abolition of slavery. The management of his father's sugar plantations in the West Indies had been attacked. Mr. Gladstone informed the House that his father's manager was the kindest of men, and the slaves under his charge were the happiest, healthiest, and most contented of their race. He argued, therefore, that the slaves should be educated to see their responsibilities before they were set free.

Earnest in his manner, and eloquent in his speech, he at once commanded the respect and attention of his fellow-members. And so it happened that when, two years later, a new Ministry was formed under Sir Robert Peel, for whom Mr. Gladstone had the most supreme admiration, a post in the government was found for this promising young Tory, who had shown himself so capable, and, moreover, who was possessed of a safe seat and a high character.

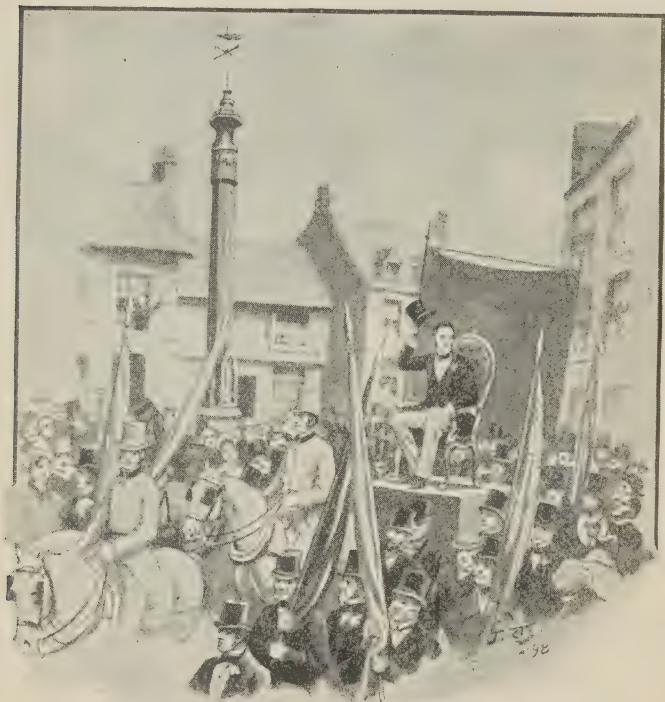
He was returned unopposed for Newark. After the election came the old custom of chairing the Member, when a most animated scene took place. Young Gladstone, now Junior Lord of the Treasury, was placed in a splendid chair, which stood on the springs of a four-wheeled carriage drawn by six beautiful grey horses, the outriders dressed in grey silk jackets. As the procession wended its way through the streets of Newark, crowds turned out to look at their distinguished young member, whose speech was greeted with "deafening cheers."

He was very soon made Under Secretary for the Colonies, and he was still but a young man of six-and-twenty.

He was as well known at this time in society as in the House. He dined out constantly; he was very musical, and delighted his hearers with the richness of

his tenor voice. Perhaps this beautiful letter from Wilberforce, afterwards Bishop of Oxford, gives the best idea of the importance of his position at this time.

"It would be an affectation in you, which you are



*"The old custom of chairing the Member."*

above," he says, "not to know that few young men have the weight you have in the House of Commons, and are gaining rapidly throughout the country.....What I want to urge upon you is, that you should calmly look far before you, see the degree of weight and influence

to which you may fairly look forward in future years, and thus act *now* with a view to *then*. There is no height to which you may not fairly rise in this country. You may at a future day wield the whole government of this land; and if this should be so, of what extreme moment will your *past steps* then be to the real usefulness of your high station. If there has been any compromise of principle before, you will not then be able to rise above it; but if all your steps have been equal, you will not then be expected to descend below them. I would have you view yourself as one who may become the head of all the better feelings of this country, the maintainer of its church and of its liberties, and who must now be fitting himself for this high vocation."

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## CHAPTER VI.

*MARRIAGE.*

"The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her.....She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life."—PROV. xxxi. 11, 12.

THE Peel Ministry was of short duration, and in 1834 Mr. Gladstone found himself out of office, and with plenty of leisure for other things. He was a man of resource, and he now turned his whole attention to theology. A book called "The State in its Relations with the Church" was the result of his busy leisure; but in the enormous amount of reading and writing the book entailed, Mr. Gladstone seriously injured his eyesight. His doctors recommended him complete rest, and he decided to spend the winter in Rome, while Lord Melbourne and his Whig Ministry were in power.

Among the visitors in Rome that winter were the widowed Lady Glynne and her two beautiful daughters. Having known Lady Glynne's eldest son while he was at Oxford, Mr. Gladstone naturally became a visitor at the house.

"Mark that young man," said an English minister to the elder Miss Glynne one day; "he will yet be Prime Minister of England."

The winter in Rome passed pleasantly away. Before the end of it Mr. Gladstone was engaged to be married to Miss Catherine Glynne, whose younger sister was at the same time engaged to Lord Lyttelton.

The double wedding took place on July 25, 1839, at St. Deiniol's Church, Hawarden—Hawarden Castle belonging to Lady Glynne's eldest son, Sir Stephen Glynne, who, dying unmarried, subsequently left the castle to Mrs. Gladstone.

The poet-friend of Mr. Gladstone, Sir Francis Doyle, was groomsman, and it was in a true prophetic spirit that he addressed these verses to the bride:—

' High hopes are thine, O eldest flower !  
Great duties to be greatly done ;  
To soothe, in many a toilworn hour,  
The noble heart which thou hast won.

" Covet not, then, the rest of those  
Who sleep through life unknown to fame ;  
Fate grants not passionless repose  
To her who wears a glorious name.

" He presses on through calm and storm  
Unshaken, let what will betide ;  
*Thou* hast an office to perform,  
To be his answering spirit-bride.

“The path appointed for his feet  
Through deserts wild and rocks may go,  
Where the eye looks in vain to greet  
The gales that from the waters blow.

“Be thou a balmy breeze to him ;  
A fountain singing at his side ;  
A star, whose light is never dim ;  
A pillar, to uphold and guide.”

For over half a century she stood by his side, the most loyal and devoted of wives ; she triumphed with his successes, she sorrowed for his failures. In days of anxiety and ill-health, it was Mrs. Gladstone who lightened the burden as far as it could be lightened by her never-failing tenderness and care. She nursed him with the skill of a nurse, she shielded him from all the minor worries of life, she took upon herself all the smaller business that was possible, to save him trouble. Other women, though younger and stronger than herself, would grow tired and disappear from the “hot, stuffy cage” in the House of Commons known as the Ladies’ Gallery ; but Mrs. Gladstone would remain at her post, forgetful of late hours, forgetful of discomfort and weariness, with eyes only for the great orator below, at the sound of whose voice the House became hushed and attentive.

From that July day when they were married in the little Hawarden church to that May day when, after months of unspeakable pain and distress, he passed from her, her hand still lovingly grasped in his, she had been an ideal wife.

Well, indeed, that Lord Rosebery turned the thoughts of the House to that “solitary and pathetic” figure, who for sixty years shared all the sorrows and all the joys





MRS. GLADSTONE.

of Mr. Gladstone's life, who received his confidence and every aspiration, who shared his triumphs with him and cheered him under his defeats, who, by her tender vigilance, sustained and prolonged his years.

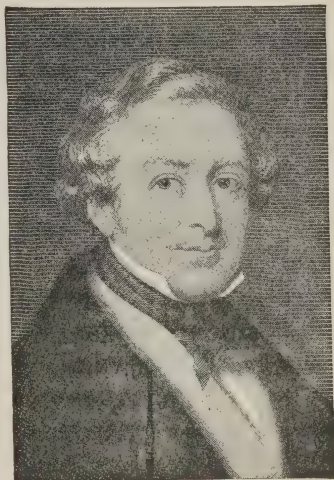
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## CHAPTER VII.

*FOR CONSCIENCE' SAKE.*

“Who revered his conscience as his king.”—TENNYSON.

MR. GLADSTONE had not been in office since 1834. It was now 1841, when, at three o'clock in the morning of the twenty-eighth of April, the Whig Government under Lord Melbourne found itself in a minority of ninety-one. During these years the young Queen had ascended the throne of England. She now sent for Sir Robert Peel and begged him to form a Ministry, which he did at once, again including his young Tory friend, William Gladstone.



SIR ROBERT PEEL.

It is said that, even at this time, Mr. Gladstone had interested himself in Ireland, and had set his heart on getting the post of Irish Secretary; but his chief had other views for him, and he was made Vice-President of the Board of Trade, a post no longer existing.

Whether he was disappointed or not, he soon set to work to master every detail of his new office. In the spirit of his father, whatever he set himself to do he did with all his might, and herein lay one of the secrets of his success.

He greatly impressed his colleagues.

"Gladstone has already displayed a capacity which makes his admission into the Cabinet indispensable," wrote a close observer at this time. He was right. Two years later Mr. Gladstone was made President of the Board of Trade and a member of the Cabinet, at the early age of thirty-three. For two years he worked well at his post, and then came a crisis which placed the young statesman in a very difficult position.

Some years before this, his book, "The State in its Relations with the Church," had been published. It had created a good deal of sensation at the time of its appearance, though Sir Robert Peel is said to have exclaimed in horror, when a copy of the book was handed him as a gift from his young follower, "With such a career before him, why should he write books?"

"It is the book of the time—a great event," wrote Baron Bunsen, "the first book since Burke that goes to the bottom of the vital question; far above his party and his time. Last night, at eleven, Gladstone's book was lying on my table, having come out at seven o'clock. I sat up till after midnight, and this morning I continued until I had read the whole. Gladstone is the first man in England as to intellectual power, and he has heard higher tones than any one else in this land."

Macaulay the historian, too, wrote a famous essay on the book, describing the young author in one sentence that has passed into history, as "a young man of unblemished character and of distinguished Parliamentary talents, the rising hope of those stern and unbending Tories."

But the "rising hope of those stern and unbending Tories" now found himself suddenly compelled to leave his post.

In the winter of 1845, Sir Robert Peel proposed a

grant to the Roman Catholic College of Maynooth in Ireland, a college for the education of young men who wished to enter the priesthood.

To Mr. Gladstone this suggested grant seemed at variance with the opinions he had recently expressed in his book on Church and State, and he was confronted with a problem. Must he pledge himself to support a measure in opposition to his opinions already expressed, or must he retire from his post?

Some of his closest friends urged him to conquer his scruples and remain in office. But Mr. Gladstone revered his conscience above all. What was power, what was fame, what was his position worth to him, if with an uneasy conscience he held them? He must do what he felt to be right, come what may. So he resigned; he gave up what he so highly prized—not only his seat in the Cabinet, but his office as President of the Board of Trade.

“It is not profane if I now say, ‘With a great price obtained I this freedom,’” he writes somewhat sadly. “I felt myself open to the charge of being opinionated and wanting in deference to really great authorities; and I could not but know that I should inevitably be regarded as fastidious and fanciful, fitter for a dreamer, or possibly a schoolman, than for the active purposes of public life in a busy and moving age.”

It was true: the public looked on puzzled; some smiled, some sneered; such refinement of scruples was somewhat hard to understand. The young Member for Newark was voted whimsical, fantastic, impracticable, a man whose “conscience was so tender that he would never go straight.”

“Well, at all events,” they said, “we have seen the last of this young Gladstone. No one will ever offer *him* a seat in the Cabinet again!”

## CHAPTER VIII.

*MEMBER FOR OXFORD.*

“I have loved the University of Oxford with a deep and passionate love; and so I shall love it to the end.”—GLADSTONE.

IN the winter of 1845, Mr. Gladstone met with a slight accident which left its mark for ever. He was fond of shooting, and many a time would rush off to the Scottish moors to see what game he “could persuade into his bag.”

One day his gun suddenly exploded at the moment when he was loading it, and so injured the first finger of his left hand that the finger had to be amputated. From that time he always wore a finger-stall and a black ribbon round his hand to cover the unfortunate stump of a finger.

It is said that when a certain artist painted his picture for the National Liberal Club, he omitted this black ribbon, as being inartistic. But Mr. Gladstone, when he saw the picture, saw too that it was untrue; he sent his finger-stall to the artist, with a request that it might be painted in. In a gun-rack at Hawarden the Westley-Richards muzzle-loader which caused this accident may still be seen.

His passion for the hewing down of trees came at a later date, and it probably did much to strengthen him and keep him in good health. For though he was a man of prodigious study, reading and writing on an immense number of subjects outside his political life, yet he never allowed himself to become a mere Member of Parliament or a mere student. He remembered that he had muscles and limbs to keep in vigorous, healthy action, and that no man can develop his mental powers to the full unless he develop his physical powers too.



He had resigned his post for conscience' sake, but meanwhile changes were taking place in the government—changes which were to influence considerably Mr. Gladstone's career.

The failure of the potato crop in Ireland in the summer of 1845 caused an Irish famine. Steps were suggested in Parliament to meet this impending calamity. Sir Robert Peel took a bold step: he urged upon his colleagues that all restrictions on the importation of food should be at once suspended. Great dissensions arose in the Cabinet. This idea of free trade had long been growing in favour. Sir Robert Peel had to bring new men into his Ministry—men who were in favour of free trade. Mr. Gladstone had by this time become a thorough convert to his chief's principles, and when invited by Peel to fill the office of Colonial Secretary he accepted the post gladly.

By so doing he forfeited his seat as Member for Newark. The Duke of Newcastle, to whose patronage Gladstone owed his seat, was emphatically against free trade. He had turned out his own son for accepting office under Peel; it was somewhat natural he should show no mercy to the "brilliant but wayward politician" who represented his views in the House of Commons.

Mr. Gladstone therefore retired from Newark, and by so doing one of his fondest hopes was realized—he was now invited to stand for the University of Oxford. There was no place in England he was better qualified to represent. Oxford had been the home of his younger days; its scenery, its surroundings, its buildings, its history, its traditions were dear to his heart. He himself confessed that he "desired it with an almost passionate fondness."

His address to the electors of Oxford is still a document

of public and personal interest. For the first time he explained certain convictions that had been growing with regard to public matters. There was great excitement over the elections ; a number of well-known men came to "plump for Gladstone," the crowd in the Convocation House was dense, and more than one ardent voter was



OXFORD.

carried out in a fainting condition, so great was the press.

At the close of the poll it was found that, though he did not head the lists, Mr. Gladstone had got his seat for the university.

"I have endeavoured to serve that university with my whole heart ; and with the strength or weakness of whatever faculties God has given me," he said pathetically,

when Oxford turned him out, after his eighteen years of serving her.

Mr. Gladstone did not hold the post of Colonial Secretary very long; for the Peel Government fell in the summer of 1846, and Lord John Russell formed a Whig Ministry, which remained in power till 1852.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### *A "FIRST-RATE PERFORMANCE."*

"Look, what thy soul holds dear, imagine it  
To lie that way thou go'st, not whence thou com'st."

SHAKESPEARE.

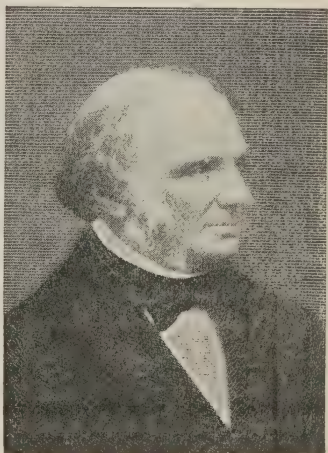
THOUGH Mr. Gladstone held no office, he yet spoke constantly in the House on all important occasions.

It was on June 24, 1850, while Lord John Russell was Prime Minister, that he made the greatest speech he had yet made—great not only because it was magnificently eloquent, but because it "marked an era; it revealed a man; it foreshadowed a life's policy."

It is interesting to see what drew forth this eloquence.

There was a Jew, a British subject, named Don Pacifico, living at Athens.

For some reason or other the Greeks had wrecked and robbed his house as long ago as 1847.



LORD JOHN RUSSELL.

Don Pacifico made the modest claim of thirty thousand pounds to the Greek Government. His bill for damages was a ridiculous one; his bedstead he valued at one hundred and fifty pounds, the sheets at thirty pounds, one pillow-case at ten pounds! The Greek Government, somewhat naturally, refused to pay this vast sum. Don Pacifico appealed to England. Lord Palmerston, Foreign Secretary under Lord John Russell, had various grievances against Greece. He ordered the Greek Government to pay Don Pacifico; and on their declining, he ordered the British fleet to enforce his commands. This high-handed course gave offence, not only to Greece, but to France and Russia. All Europe was thrown into alarm; and though war was averted, a violent attack was made on Lord Palmerston: there were murmurs that the "honour and dignity of the country" were at stake.

In a full House, Lord Palmerston defended his policy. He spoke for five hours, "from the dusk of one day to the dawn of the next."

When Mr. Gladstone rose to his feet, it was already early morning. He felt strongly that England had been meddling in matters that did not concern her; he asserted bravely that England must beware lest she be ruined by her own self-esteem.

"Sir," he cried in the course of his speech, "I say the policy of the noble lord tends to encourage and confirm in us that which is our besetting fault and weakness, both as a nation and as individuals. Let an Englishman travel where he will, as a private person, he is found in general to be upright, high-minded, brave, liberal, and true; but with all this.....he has too great a tendency to self-esteem—too little disposition to regard the feelings, the habits, and the ideas of others. Let us recognize, and recognize with frankness, the equality of

the weak with the strong; the principle of brotherhood among nations, and of their sacred independence. When we are asking for the maintenance of the rights which belong to our fellow-subjects resident in Greece, let us do as we would be done by."

The whole speech was on a very high level. It was, as even Lord Palmerston acknowledged, a "first-rate performance." It showed forth, for the first time, the high standard of the young statesman—those principles which had "grown with his growth, and strengthened with his strength."

As a test of foreign policy, he asks, "not whether it is striking or brilliant or successful, but is it right? Is it consistent with moral principle and public duty; with the chivalry due from the strong to the weak; with the principles of brotherhood among nations, and of their sacred independence?"

The debate lasted four days. As the sunlight was beginning to stream into the corridors and lobbies of the House, the members left. Among them was Sir Robert Peel. He was leaving for the last time. That very Saturday afternoon he had a fall from his horse. The injuries he received were beyond human skill to cure. He lingered two or three days, and then died.

It fell to Mr. Gladstone, his young disciple, to pay the last tribute in the House of Commons to his departed chief. He felt his loss very keenly, as was shown in his speech, which was both eloquent and pathetic.

"I call it," he said, "the premature death of Sir Robert Peel; for although he has died full of years and full of honours, yet it is a death that in human eyes is premature, because we had fondly hoped that, in whatever position Providence might assign to him, by the weight of his ability, by the splendour of his talents,



and by the purity of his virtues, he might still have been spared to render us most essential services." He ended his brilliant speech by quoting Scott's words on the death of Pitt:—

" Now is the stately column broke,  
The beacon light is quenched in smoke,  
The trumpet's silver voice is still,  
The warder silent on the hill."

Thirty years later, when speaking in Midlothian, Mr. Gladstone spoke thus of his old chief: "Let me, gentlemen, in the face of you who are Liberals, and determined Liberals, let me render this tribute to the memory of Sir Robert Peel. I never knew a more conscientious public man; I never knew a more enlightened statesman. And this opinion I give with confidence, in the face of the world, founded upon many years of intimate communication with him upon every subject of public interest."

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## CHAPTER X.

### *MR. GLADSTONE'S HOLIDAY.*

"He stood forth simply as a leader in the cause of humanity."

J. M'CARTHY.

In the winter of 1850, Mr. Gladstone, still out of office, went to Naples with his wife and family. One of his children was ill, and a warm climate was advised for her. In the early spring he had lost his little child Catherine, five years old, and this had proved a terrible grief both to father and mother. So they started off before Christmas, Mr. Gladstone with no other idea than to watch over the recovery of his child, and to give himself a rest from his political work. But he was not to rest long.

He soon found there was other work cut out for him in Naples besides loitering among the ruins of Pompeii or watching the eruptions of Vesuvius.

The kingdom of Naples at that time was one of the worst-governed countries in Europe. Mr. Gladstone soon learned the evils of misrule; he heard of thousands in



NAPLES.

prison subjected to cruelties and insults. His humanity was stirred to its depths; his holiday was at an end. He got leave to visit the prisons. He saw the men in their chains; he found out who they were and what they had done; he found men of high character and honour suffering unjustly. Having satisfied himself of the truth of all this, he wrote a letter to Lord Aberdeen, pointing

out the "horrors" amidst which the government of Naples was carried on.

This letter, dated April 7, 1851, was published, and it created great consternation throughout Europe. It was followed by a second and a third. They were simple, they were eloquent, they were the work of a man who saw injustice and cruelty in the place of justice and mercy, and, knowing it, could not keep silent. He must right the wrong where it was possible.

Still the controversy raged. He was meddling with the concerns of another nation, people said, remembering well his great speech but a few months before. Perhaps Lord Palmerston summed up the situation best in his answer to the House.

"Mr. Gladstone," he said, "whom I may freely name, though not in his capacity of a Member of Parliament, has done himself, I think, very great honour by the course he pursued at Naples, and by the course he has followed since; for I think that when you see an English gentleman, who goes to pass a winter at Naples, instead of confining himself to those amusements that abound in that city, instead of diving into volcanoes and exploring excavated cities—when we see him going to courts of justice, visiting prisons, descending into dungeons.....with a view afterwards to enlist public opinion in the endeavour to remedy those abuses—I think that is a course that does honour to the person who pursues it; and concurring in feeling with him that the influence of public opinion in Europe might have some useful effect in setting such matters right, I thought it my duty to send copies of his pamphlet to our Ministers at the various Courts of Europe."

The result of Mr. Gladstone's work at Naples was seen,

some years later, in the revolution which created a free and united Italy.

Perhaps the following story shows how he lived in the hearts of Italians for many a long year:—

An English boy of fifteen, travelling with his father in Italy many years later, was taken very ill in a little mountain village. He was nursed by the Italian hotel-keeper and his wife as if he had been their own child, and the village doctor watched by him day and night. When he got well, the father very naturally offered the doctor his fee, but to his immense surprise the doctor refused it. He asked the reason.

"The debt has been long ago paid," answered the doctor.

The father was puzzled, and asked for an explanation.

"We Italians can never forget what your nation has done for ours," he said; and taking a small locket out of his pocket, he opened it and showed them a portrait of Mr. Gladstone.

Those letters on the horrors inflicted on political prisoners in Naples had first awakened the conscience of Europe to the oppression of the Italian people.

Mr. Gladstone had spoken as man to man. "He stood forth simply as a leader in the cause of humanity; that, and that only, was the flag he unfurled."

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## CHAPTER XI.

### *HIS FIRST BUDGET.*

"Law in his voice and fortune in his hand."—JOHNSON.

IN 1852, Lord John Russell's Ministry came to an end, and Lord Derby was made Prime Minister. Among

other appointments, he made Mr. Disraeli Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the House of Commons.

Now Mr. Disraeli had many and various gifts, but not one of his admirers had hitherto dreamed of including a capacity for the mastery of figures. Hence it came about that his first Budget was very severely criticized. For some time the debate on this Budget waxed fast and furious. At last Mr. Disraeli rose to defend his hapless proposals. He spoke for five hours. He had never spoken with greater power; he pelted his opponents with sarcasm, and among other points he indulged in some scathing personal remarks. These stung Mr. Gladstone, sitting on the Opposition benches, into unexpected reply. It was two o'clock one December morning when Mr. Disraeli finished his speech.

"At that moment, when friends and foes alike thought that the last word had been spoken on either side, Mr. Gladstone bounded on to the floor amidst a storm of cheering and counter-cheering such as the walls of Parliament have never re-echoed since, and plunged straight into the heart of an oration which, in a single day, doubled his influence in Parliament and his popularity in the country."

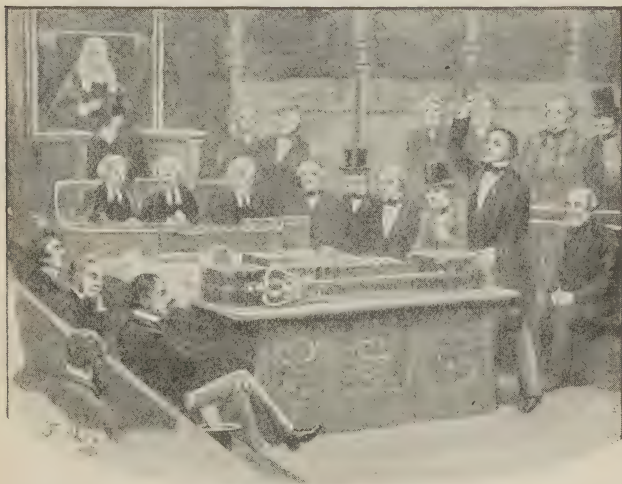
"Gladstone has got his work cut out for him," said a member, as the young statesman rose to his feet.

Such a speech must be answered on the moment, he affirmed in his clear, musical voice, though he was labouring under great excitement; it must be tried by the laws of decency and propriety. He condemned the language that had fallen from the lips of Mr. Disraeli as Leader of the House; then he attacked the financial scheme of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Point by point, almost sentence by sentence, he answered his rival, until it became evident that he was creating a deeper impression on the House than Mr. Disraeli had done.



The Budget was living when Mr. Gladstone rose; when he sat down it was dead. In the early winter morning the division was taken—the government was defeated. Mr. Gladstone's speech had turned the vote.

Before another night passed, the resignation of the government was in the Queen's hands. The new Ministry, under Lord Aberdeen, found Mr. Gladstone in his rival's place as Chancellor of the Exchequer.



*"Mr. Gladstone held the house spell-bound."*

His Budget was awaited with the keenest interest. Much was expected, but Mr. Gladstone surpassed all expectations. It has been given to few financiers to make their Budget speech an interesting one. Mr. Gladstone's five-hours' speech "held the House spell-bound."

Here was an orator who could make "pippins and cheese interesting and tea serious;" a financier who could make the "dry bones of finance live;" one who could

brighten the dullest financial subject with what might almost be called the "musical touch of genius," who could legislate with a prophetic mind for an unknown future, and yet bestow unlimited time and attention on "penny stamps and soap."

"It tended," said Mr. Russell, "to make life easier and cheaper for large and numerous classes."

He considered the poor people; he abolished the duty on soap—it was a tax on cleanliness, and injurious. He reduced the tax on tea by fourpence farthing a pound. He showed how carefully he had studied every detail by repealing taxes on all sorts of out-of-the-way things, such as paint-brushes, blacking, spectacles, preserved cucumbers, hams, honey, cider, and anchovies. He had carried out, as far as possible, the principles of that chief under whom he began his political career—the principles of free trade.

Here is a story which illustrates his attention to detail, and shows the time he must have given up to be certain he was correct in his figures:—

He was engaged one day in making a note of some shipping returns for the Budget in the London office of one Mr. Lindsey. A wealthy shipowner entered the office to see Mr. Lindsey on business, but that gentleman being out, he agreed to wait.

Mr. Gladstone went on meanwhile quietly copying his statistics. At last the shipowner came up to him and looked over his notes.

"Thou writest a bonny hand," he said.

"I am glad you think so," was the quiet reply.

"Ah, thou dost; thou makest thy figures well; thou'st just the chap I want. I'm a man of few words. If thou'lt come over to canny old Sunderland, I'll give thee a hundred and twenty pounds a year; and that's a plum thou doesn't meet with every day in thy life, I reckon."

The young Minister thanked him for his kind offer, and when Mr. Lindsey entered, informed him of it.

"Very well," said Mr. Lindsey. "I should be sorry to stand in your way, but under the circumstances I think the sooner you know each other the better. Allow me, therefore, to introduce the Right Honourable William Ewart Gladstone."



*"Thou writest a bonny hand."*

The wealthy shipowner was not a little taken aback, but he soon enjoyed the joke as thoroughly as did Mr. Gladstone himself.

This Budget of 1853 proclaimed Mr. Gladstone at the head of all financiers of his day. It was but the first of the thirteen Budgets which he framed in the course of his long and useful life.

## CHAPTER XII.

*SOME PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS.*

"Truth, for truth is truth, he worshipped, being true as he was brave;  
Good, for good is good, he followed, yet he looked beyond the grave."  
TENNYSON.

MR. GLADSTONE was now a conspicuous figure, not only in the House of Commons, but conspicuous as a scholar, author, and man of society. The author of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" met him one night at dinner about this time, and, describing the party, she says:—

"Mr. Gladstone was also there, one of the ablest and best men in the kingdom. For a gentleman who has attained to such celebrity, both in theology and politics, he looks remarkably young. He is tall, with dark eyes and hair, a thoughtful cast of countenance, and is easy and agreeable in conversation."

We have seen him steadily mounting the ladder of success rung by rung—as a boy, successful by reason of his unceasing industry; as a man, adding to this a determination to do right regardless of results. The spirit in which he rebuked his school-fellows for bullying the pigs was the same which moved him to plead for the political prisoners in Italy, and, later, for the Bulgarians in their misery.

Like Tennyson's knight, his "glory was, redressing human wrong." From his Oxford days, when he had refused to see even his best friends till two o'clock in the afternoon, giving up his morning to study, to the days when he retired to Hawarden, and the evening of his life came upon him, he gave up part of every day to solid reading whenever it was possible. He felt his time as a sacred trust, not to be wasted and frittered

away in useless amusements and pursuits, but to be spent in some fine and manly way for the good of all mankind.

Even in the trivial concerns of everyday life he felt always responsible to an Invisible Judge. He was haunted by this responsibility with regard to his time, his talents, and his opportunities for influence and power—responsibility for reading and writing and speaking, responsibility for the people committed to his charge in the country.

To the Church of England he clung with an ever-increasing firmness; he always felt that herein lay England's strength. He loved her services, and made a point of going to church every morning at eight o'clock, and this though he hated getting up early.

"I hate getting up in the morning, and hate it the same every morning," he used to say. "But one can do everything by habit, and when I have had my seven hours' sleep my habit is to get up."

He had a wonderful power of sleeping, even after the most exciting debates in the House, or at the time of some crisis in the world's history. It is said that the only time in his whole life when sleep forsook him was during the terrible suspense preceding the death of General Gordon at Khartoum.

His observance of Sunday as a day of rest was another principle which he adhered to religiously.

"It is Sunday, I am convinced, that has kept me alive and well, even to a marvel, in times of considerable labour," he used to say.

Even during the height of the session, when work pressed on him, any one entering his room in Downing Street on a Sunday could not fail to be impressed by the deserted writing-table, the absence of papers and



newspapers, and the atmosphere of rest that pervaded all. From Saturday night to Monday morning he put away all business, refused all dinner parties and expeditions that involved travelling.

And being a man of habit, he never relaxed these customs of his youth. A man of habit, indeed, he was. There was something very pathetic in the words he said the very year he was dying, as an old man of eighty-nine, when the doctor at last prevailed on him to take opiates to soothe his pain.

"I am so afraid," he said, half playfully, half seriously, to his wife, "so afraid of falling into bad habits."

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## CHAPTER XIII.

### *A WAR BUDGET.*

"A matter for weeping all day and praying all night."

GLADSTONE.

MR. GLADSTONE had promised much in his Budget of 1853, including the gradual reduction of the income tax by twopence. But times were out of joint, and the promises were not to be fulfilled. The autumn brought a bad harvest, and in the following spring war was declared against Russia in the Crimea.

John Bright, Mr. Gladstone's great friend and ally, was, some years later, walking with his schoolboy son past the Guards' Monument in Waterloo Place. The boy caught sight of the solitary word "Crimea," and asked his father what it meant.

"A crime!" answered Bright emphatically.

Whether this was a fact or not, the country had drifted into war with Russia in 1854, and it fell to the

lot of Mr. Gladstone, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, to prepare a War Budget.

All his bright schemes of cultivating industry, of improving the condition of the people, of cutting down the income tax, were swept away, and he—peace-loving man that he was—set himself to his distasteful task.

There is no need to go into the details of that terrible winter—to the mismanagement which caused such distress to our brave soldiers, to the sufferings of our troops, to the deaths of “the multitude of brave men who sleep beside the waters of the Bosphorus or under the rocks of Balaclava,” as Mr. Gladstone put it. It is all an old story now.

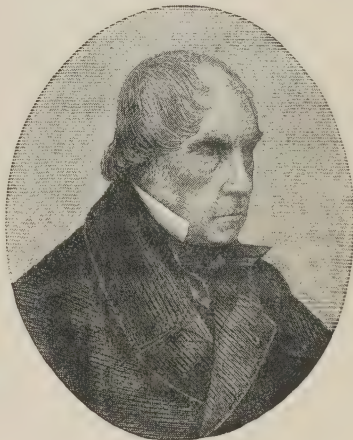
There was a great outcry in the country against the government which had allowed these things to come to pass, and a motion was passed in Parliament calling for an inquiry into the conduct of those departments of the government whose duty it had been to minister to the wants of the army.

The result of the motion was the defeat of Lord Aberdeen's Government.

The result of the motion was the defeat of Lord Aberdeen's Government.

Lord Palmerston was called on to form a Ministry, which he did, making Mr. Gladstone once more Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Mr. Gladstone's own definition of a Chancellor of the



LORD ABERDEEN.

Exchequer, and what he ought to be, were given years after in one of his Midlothian speeches.

"The Chancellor of the Exchequer," he said, "shall boldly uphold economy in detail; and it is the mark of, I was going to say, a chicken-hearted Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he shrinks from upholding economy in detail. He is ridiculed, no doubt, for what is called saving candle-ends and cheese-parings. No Chancellor of the Exchequer is worth his salt who is not ready to save what are meant by candle-ends and cheese-parings in the cause of his country. No Chancellor of the Exchequer is worth his salt who makes his own popularity either his first consideration or any consideration at all in administering the public purse. You would not like to have a housekeeper or steward who made her or his popularity with the tradesmen the measure of the payments that were to be delivered to them. In my opinion, the Chancellor of the Exchequer is the trusted and confidential steward of the public. He is under a sacred obligation with regard to all that he consents to spend."

This was an important appointment; it marked a distinct step in his career, insomuch as it was the first time that he had consented to take office under a Whig leader. When Mr. Gladstone joined Lord Palmerston's Cabinet, it was clear that, though not yet anything of an advanced Liberal or Radical, he had done for ever with the "stern and unbending Tories," of whom Macaulay had called him the "rising hope."

But he did not serve long under the new government. He had taken office on the understanding that no further inquiry would be made with regard to the Crimean War. Lord Palmerston saw that the country would never be satisfied without some such inquiry, and on his consenting

to it, Mr. Gladstone resigned, or, as he tells us, was "driven from office."

"I greatly felt being turned out of office," he said sadly. "I saw great things to do, and I longed to do them. I am losing the best years out of my natural service."

He was now in a somewhat isolated position. He was out of harmony with his chief, and out of sympathy with others who wanted him to accept office. He could not remain under Lord Palmerston, neither could he oppose him. He held aloof from politics.

"Gladstone hardly ever goes near the House of Commons, and never opens his lips," observed Mr. Greville in 1857.

Mr. Disraeli wished him to join the Tory ranks once more; it is said that he almost went on his knees to Mr. Gladstone to get his promise to join a Tory Cabinet some day.

But Mr. Gladstone was not inclined to play second fiddle to Disraeli, and he was finding himself daily more in sympathy with the Liberals.

His political future was veiled in mystery. His talents had been recognized. Whigs and Tories alike knew that he must one day be Prime Minister. But on which side?

"Gladstone intends to be Prime Minister," said Lord Aberdeen. "He has great qualifications, but some serious defects—the chief, that when he has convinced himself of some view, he thinks every one else ought at once to see it as he does, and can make no allowance for difference of opinion."

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## CHAPTER XIV.

*A CONGENIAL TASK.*

“But our masters then  
Were still, at least, our countrymen.”—BYRON.

THE years that followed this enforced retirement of Mr. Gladstone were by no means idle years. They supplied him with the time necessary to complete his book called “Studies on Homer and the Homeric Age.” The study of Greek literature fascinated him; “the blind old man of Scio’s rocky isle” possessed for him an everlasting charm. It must, therefore, have been peculiarly pleasant to him when he was called on, in 1858, to go to Corfu as Lord High Commissioner to the Ionian Islands.

There was an outcry in England when Mr. Gladstone was selected to inquire into the grievances of the Ionian Islanders.

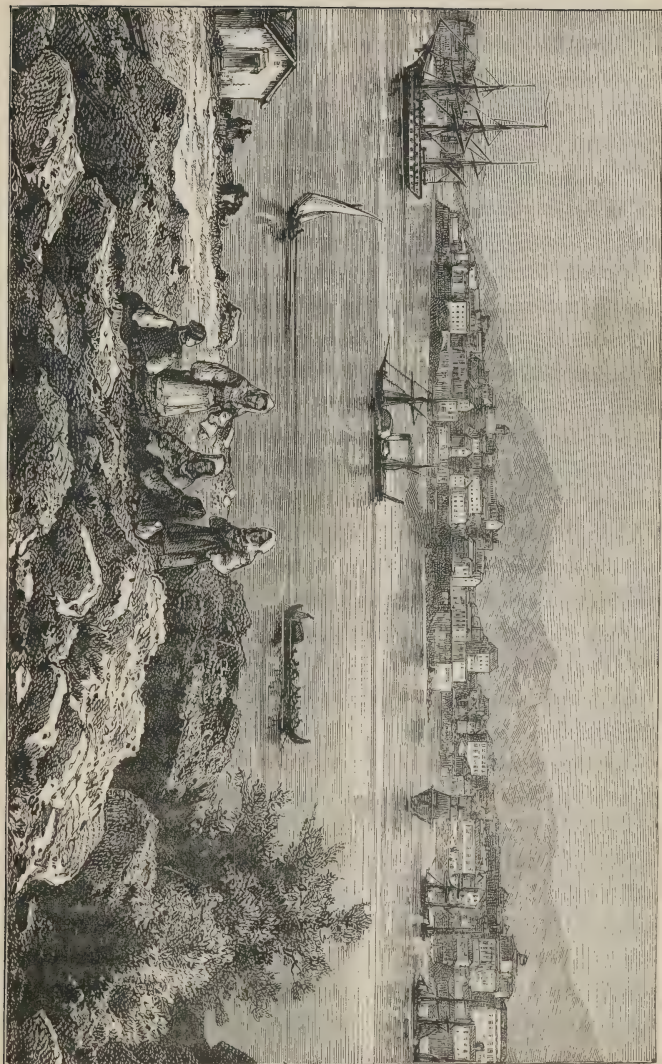
“They propose to send out a man on a mission to the disturbed Ionian Islands for no other reason than because he is fond of reading Homer!” they murmured.

The Ionian Islands were at this time in a disturbed condition. For the past forty-three years they had been under the protection of Britain; but for some time now there had been growing complaints, not so much against British administration as against being under Britain at all. It was necessary to send out a man who should discover the real secret of their discontent. And this Mr. Gladstone did. He arrived at Corfu in November 1858.

“It must have been to him like the actual realization of youth’s best dream when he stood on the soil of Greece; when he went from island to island of that enchanting



SCENE IN COFU.



country for which nature and poetry and history and tradition have done so much ; when he saw the home of Ulysses and the fabled rock of Sappho ; and, above all, when he climbed the Acropolis of Athens and gazed upon the Parthenon, and, turning his eyes one way, looked on Mount Hymettus, and, turning another way, saw Salamis, and then, on a clear day, the outlines of the steep of Acro-Corinthus."

To a man steeped to the lips in all the poetry, the history, the traditions of Greece, this must have been a day of days.

But, disregarding a keen desire to give himself up to sight-seeing, he gave himself up loyally to the task he had undertaken for the British Government. He gave public addresses at Corfu and other Greek islands, speaking always in the best Italian, which the people understood. He made full inquiry into every complaint, and he soon arrived at the root of the matter, and discovered there was but one cure for the real grievance. They yearned, these Greek islanders, with an almost romantic yearning, to be united once more to the kingdom of Greece.

"We are Greeks!" they cried, "and we want to be united to the people of our own blood."

The people of the islands received Mr. Gladstone with enthusiasm ; they believed him to be in favour of this great wish of their hearts ; they cheered him, not so much as the Lord High Commissioner sent officially from England, as "Gladstone the Philhellene."

His tour through the islands was one triumphal progress ; his path was strewn with flowers, his words were hung on eagerly.

He, on his part, did all he could to make the idea of British protection more attractive to the islanders.

They listened and cheered him, but they stuck to their colours—they insisted on union with the kingdom of Greece. Mr. Gladstone saw the justice of their demand; he saw that nothing short of this would satisfy them.

“We can easily crush them by superior strength, but until we have extinguished the life of the last Greek islander, we cannot extinguish the just and natural passion for union with parent Greece,” he said emphatically at home.

And he did not speak in vain. A few years later the question was settled.

The Greeks grew wearied of the heavy rule of King Otho, and at last in desperation “bundled him out of Athens, bag and baggage.”

They asked our sailor prince, Alfred of England, to be their king; but this was impossible.

Finally, in the spring of 1863, George, second son of the King of Denmark, brother to the Princess of Wales, became King of the Hellenes, his kingdom including the Ionian Islands.

## CHAPTER XV.

### *A LIBERAL.*

“Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward let us range;  
Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change.”

TENNYSON.

“To live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often.”

NEWMAN.

A TURNING-POINT in Mr. Gladstone's career had now been reached. In 1859, Lord Palmerston formed a Ministry, and under him, for the second time, Mr. Gladstone became Chancellor of the Exchequer.

It was no sudden change this. As has been seen, he had long been tending toward Liberal principles; now he separated himself entirely from his old party. "His hand was fairly set to the plough, and there was no more looking back." He had taken service with the Liberals, and henceforth his growth in the idea of freedom and progress was to be very rapid.

His Budget of 1860 was as ingenious as that of 1853. It is interesting to the world at large as having been the means of introducing the now well-known penny newspaper to the British public. Up to this time the tax on paper had been high, and hence newspapers cost sixpence, a price which placed them out of the reach of the poor.

Liverpool, Mr. Gladstone's birthplace, started the first penny daily paper ever published in Great Britain; this was soon followed by *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Morning Star*, and *The Daily News*. It was the first step towards spreading popular education, for it multiplied cheap newspapers, which brought the daily story of the world to the cottages and garrets of the poor.

This was the first reform Mr. Gladstone carried as a Liberal; the day was to come when his reforming work would carry him yet further—when he would materially add to the freedom and liberties of the English people.

The Budget speech was a magnificent and masterly performance. The war, and the exhaustion following on war, were fatal to progress. To most Chancellors of the Exchequer the financial outlook in 1860 would have been gloomy enough. To Mr. Gladstone, to grapple with financial difficulties was an intellectual pleasure. Nothing daunted, and notwithstanding a large deficit, he had spoken in his Budget of a proposed commercial

treaty with France, itself necessitating a reduction of duties on wines. On the other hand, the repeal of the duty on paper, and the reduction of various other duties, made the increase of the income tax inevitable.

Again his mastery over detail was astounding.

Here is a story, which, if it be true, shows how well he remembered the merest details of his Budgets:—

Some one told him, not many years ago, the story of a very deaf old lady who had been heard protesting vehemently to the Custom House officials at Dover that she had no contraband articles with her, while, at the same time, a musical-box was heard plaintively performing “Home, Sweet Home,” beneath the flounces of her dress.

Mr. Gladstone heard the story with compressed lips and flashing eyes.

“And this occurred, you say, last year? It is impossible, monstrously impossible!” he cried. “I myself abolished the duty on musical-boxes in the year 1860.”

It was becoming more and more evident that Gladstone was by far the ablest man in the House of Commons; all saw that he was destined to be the leader of the people of England.

“Gladstone must rise,” said Bishop Wilberforce; “he is young, he is by far the ablest man in the House of Commons, and in it, in the long run, the ablest man must lead.”

He was now the hope of the reform-loving Liberals, and looked on as the advocate for freedom and progress.

Here is a story of him about this time, when Chancellor of the Exchequer, which shows his characteristic love of power, and his absolute determination to be master of every situation:—

He was taking his usual ride in Hyde Park on a



very spirited and even wild young horse, when the animal suddenly plunged and ran away, got off the ordinary track of riders, and making for a little light iron gateway, went straight over it. Mr. Gladstone was determined to be master. The moment the horse had leaped the gate the rider turned him round and put him at the gate again. Again he jumped it, and again his rider turned him to it and made him jump. So it went on until the horse was fairly conquered and his rider had gained the victory.

The story got into the papers. "It would take a very reckless horse or a very reckless political opponent to get the better of Mr. Gladstone," said one. "He has made his party face many a stiff fence since the far-off days of that little event in Hyde Park."

Another illustration of the way Mr. Gladstone had broken free from all traditions of his early Parliamentary career lay in his support of popular suffrage. In April 1864 he spoke vehemently in favour of allowing the labouring man to vote.

"We are told," he said, in the course of a brilliant speech, "we are told that the working classes do not agitate for the suffrage; but is it well that we should wait until they do agitate? An agitation by the working classes is not like an agitation by the classes above them having leisure. The agitation of the classes having leisure is easily conducted. Every hour of their time has not a money value; their wives and children are not dependent on the application of these hours of labour.

"But when a working man finds himself in such a condition that he must abandon that daily labour on which he is strictly dependent for his daily bread, it is only because then, in railway language, the danger-

signal is turned on, and because he feels a strong necessity for action, and a distrust in the rulers who have driven him to that necessity."

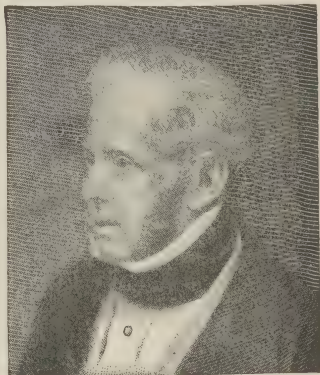
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## CHAPTER XVI.

*REJECTED FOR OXFORD.*

"Thus I turn my back ;  
There is a world elsewhere."—SHAKESPEARE.

THE long Parliament of Lord Palmerston came to an end on July 6, 1865. Mr. Gladstone had never been in sympathy with his chief. Lord Palmerston had always mocked at enthusiasm and despised earnestness. It was impossible he should get on well with a man with whom "every opinion was a belief and every feeling a passion," who from boyhood to old age could never take anything lightly.



LORD PALMERSTON.

The dissolution was fraught with important changes for Mr. Gladstone. As events turned out, he had represented the University of Oxford for the last time. Since he had accepted office in a Liberal Government, his hold on his constituents in the university had been weakened. In the spring of this year he had made a speech, strongly denouncing the establishment of the Irish Church. She stood, he said, in a false position,

ministering only to one-eighth of the whole community. This speech was printed and circulated by his Oxford opponents, and had, doubtless, some considerable effect on the election.

"Without having to complain," Mr. Gladstone had said even five years before, "I am entirely sick and weary of the terms upon which I hold the seat."

Yet he was reluctant to sever a bond which had brought him so much happiness and so much honour. He offered himself for re-election. When the voting closed he was at the bottom of the poll. On the eighteenth of July he uttered his parting address:—

"After an arduous connection of eighteen years, I bid you respectfully farewell. My earnest purpose to serve you, my many faults and shortcomings, the incidents of the political relation between the university and myself, established in 1847, so often questioned in vain, and now at length finally dissolved, I leave to the judgment of the future. It is one imperative duty, and one alone, which induces me to trouble you with these few parting words—the duty of expressing my profound and lasting gratitude for indulgence as generous, and for support as warm and enthusiastic in itself, and as honourable from the character and distinctions of those who have given it, as has, in my belief, been accorded by any constituency to any representative."

It was a bitter moment.

"There have been two great deaths.....in my political existence," he wrote to a friend three days later—"one, very slow, the breaking of ties with my original party; the other, very short and sharp, the breaking of the tie with Oxford."

Mr. Gladstone had now to seek another seat. He turned his face towards South Lancashire.

“By George!” cried one of his friends when the news of his defeat was known, “won’t Oxford catch it to-night at Liverpool.”

Mr. Gladstone’s revenge was somewhat different from his expectations.

The whole man was wounded, sorely wounded; but he loved Oxford too well to take his revenge on her.

“I am not angry, only sorry, and that deeply,” he wrote; and his so-called revenge was couched in these words:—

“I have endeavoured to serve that university with my whole heart; and with the strength or weakness of whatever faculties God has given me, it has been my daily and nightly care to promote her interests, and to testify to her as well as I could my love. Long has she borne with me. Long, in spite of active opposition, did she resist every effort to displace me. At last she has changed her mind. My earnest desire, my heart’s prayer, is that her future may be as glorious as her past, and yet more glorious still.”

Turning to his new constituents, he repeated the same thing.

“Do not let me come among you under false colours or with false pretences,” he cries. “I have loved the University of Oxford with a deep and passionate love, and as long as I live that attachment will continue. If my affection is of the smallest advantage to that great, that ancient, that noble institution, that advantage Oxford will possess as long as I breathe.....Could they have retained me by a majority of one, nothing could have induced me to quit that university to which I had so long ago devoted my best care and attachment.”

South Lancashire returned three members. When the voting closed it was found that Mr. Gladstone had

secured a seat, being returned in the third place ; but that seat was alarmingly insecure.

“ Mr. Gladstone is a dangerous man,” his chief is reported to have said. “ In Oxford he is muzzled ; but send him elsewhere, he will run wild.”

Good-humouredly Mr. Gladstone used these words to the electors of South Lancashire. “ At last, my friends,” he said, “ I am come among you ; and I am come, to use an expression which has become very famous, and is not likely to be forgotten, I am come unmuzzled.”

The words were significant. As long as Mr. Gladstone was politically associated with Oxford, the *alma mater* he loved with such changeless affection, it was possible he might resist the silent forces which were carrying him onward towards Liberalism. When Oxford snapped the chain, he was free to go whither he listed. He had retired from the representation of Newark in order to pursue the interests of free trade ; he had been driven from the representation of Oxford because he was bent on disestablishing the Irish Church.

Henceforth it would be as *The Times* of 1865 remarked : “ Mr. Gladstone will belong to the country, but no longer to the university.”

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## CHAPTER XVII.

### REFORM.

“ We strive with time at wrestling,  
Till time be on our side.”—SWINBURNE.

LORD PALMERSTON never met his new Parliament. He died on the eighteenth of October, within a few days of completing his eighty-first year. All eyes were turned



towards Mr. Gladstone as a possible successor; but the Queen wrote on the nineteenth of October that she could "turn to no other than Lord Russell, an old and tried friend of hers, to undertake the arduous duties of Prime Minister, and to carry on the Government."

Mr. Gladstone resumed office as Chancellor of the Exchequer, and for the first time he now became Leader of the House of Commons. He was at one with the new Prime Minister on the subject of reform.

Lord Russell had brought in a Reform Bill in 1852, he had brought in another just before the Crimean War, and in 1860 he had brought in a third. All had failed; and now he gladly embraced the chance of completing in his old age the work to which he had devoted his youth and early manhood.

Mr. Gladstone's first appearance as Leader of the House of Commons was awaited with curiosity. To him fell the task of introducing the Reform Bill dealing with the franchise.

"Gladstone has risen entirely to his position, and done all his most sanguine friends hoped for as leader," wrote Bishop Wilberforce. "There is a general feeling of the insecurity of the Ministry, and the Reform Bill to be launched to-night is thought somewhat hopeless."

The Chancellor of the Exchequer introduced the Reform Bill that night with singular skill.

Some of his speeches on it were the finest he ever made. One of his most celebrated was made on the eighteenth of April. Rising at one o'clock in the morning, he spoke as he had never spoken before. His whole heart was in his subject. He knew the risk to the government. "We have crossed the Rubicon," he said, "and burned our boats."

With kindling eye and expressive gesture, in a voice

responsive to every phase of the orator's feelings, musical, deep, sonorous, he spoke to that crowded and eager assembly of men.

"I can see him now as he delivered the beautiful peroration," said a close friend. "The impassioned manner and voice of the combatant suddenly changed, and, leaning his elbow on the table, he faced the Opposition, and in a gentle voice of pleading pathos and seer-like warning, which thrilled through the stilled assembly, he spoke this fine passage:—

" 'You cannot fight against the future. Time is on our side. The great social forces which move onwards in their might and majesty, and which the tumult of these debates does not for a moment impede or disturb—those great social forces are against you. They work with us; they are marshalled in our support. And the banner which we now carry in the fight, though perhaps, at some moment of the strife, it may droop over our sinking heads, yet will float again in the eye of heaven, and will be borne by the firm hands of the united people of the three kingdoms, perhaps not to an easy, but to a certain and to a not distant, victory.' "

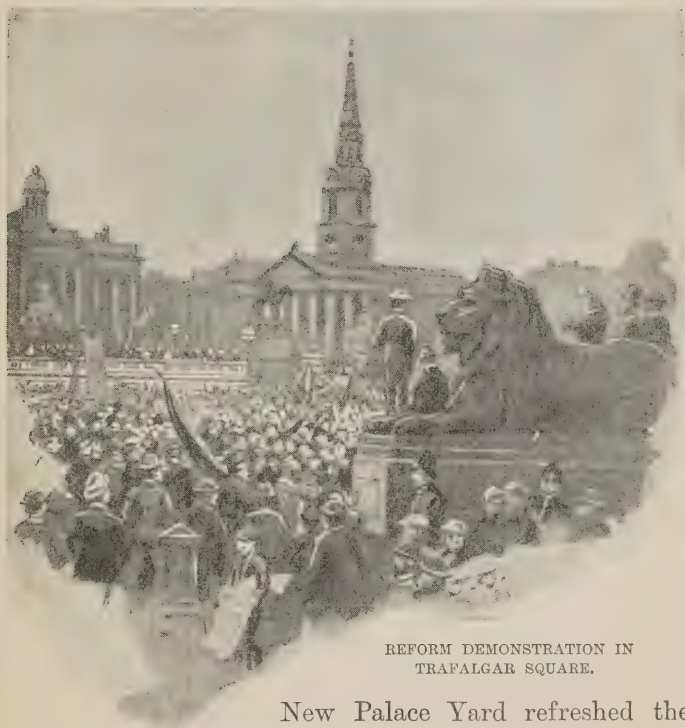
The division took place amid the greatest excitement.

"The House was charged with electricity like a vast thundercloud," said one who was present. "Strangers rose in their seats, the crowd at the bar pushed half-way up the House, the royal princes leaned forward in their places, and all was confusion."

When the teller had proclaimed that the majority for the government was only five, there arose a wild, raging, mad-brained shout from floor and gallery such as has never been heard in the House; hats were waved, hands were clapped, and hurrahs sounded through the building.

In vain did Mr. Gladstone lift up his hand to bespeak silence. At length the noise died away, and, amid a strange hush, the Chancellor of the Exchequer spoke a few words.

Twilight was brightening into day as the fresh air in



REFORM DEMONSTRATION IN  
TRAFALGAR SQUARE.

New Palace Yard refreshed the heated brows of the excited members.

The government resigned, but Mr. Gladstone was the hero of the hour.

Some ten thousand people assembled in Trafalgar Square and passed vehement resolutions in favour of reform. They then marched to Carlton House Terrace,

singing litanies and hymns in honour of Mr. Gladstone ; his name was received everywhere with tumultuous cheers, and he was hailed as the true Leader of the Liberal party.

A new Ministry was formed by Lord Derby, and time soon proved the truth of Mr. Gladstone's great speech.

The spirit of the people had been aroused by the dismissal of their trusted leaders, Lord Russell and Mr. Gladstone ; public opinion was now thoroughly aroused in favour of reform. Meeting after meeting was held in Hyde Park of crowds clamouring for an extension of the suffrage. Fearful of a disturbance to the public peace, the gates of the park were closed and barred. But the reformers were not to be so easily daunted. They pulled down the railings, rushed through the breach, and took forcible possession of the park.

Reform was so loudly demanded by public opinion that the Conservative Ministers were compelled to listen ; and Lord Derby, the Prime Minister, with Mr. Disraeli as Leader of the House, found themselves driven to introduce a Reform Bill of a far more sweeping character than that which had failed in the names of Lord Russell and Mr. Gladstone.

The Ministry that so successfully carried the Reform Bill was not of long duration. In 1868, Lord Derby retired in ill-health, to be succeeded by Mr. Disraeli as Prime Minister.

No one doubted that Mr. Gladstone would be the next.

One afternoon in November 1868, Mr. Gladstone, in his shirt sleeves, was cutting down a tree in Hawarden Park, while a friend of his, Evelyn Ashley, was holding his coat and watching the proceedings. Suddenly up came a messenger with a telegram. Mr. Gladstone opened it and read it.

"Very significant," he said, handing it to his friend to read. Then, without saying another word, he resumed his work.

The telegram stated that an order was coming from the Queen. The well-directed blows continued. Presently they ceased.

Mr. Gladstone, resting on the handle of his axe, looked



*"A messenger with a telegram."*

up, and, with deep earnestness in his voice and a look of great intensity in his face, exclaimed, "My mission is to pacify Ireland."

He then resumed his task, and never said another word till the tree was down.



Soon after, the royal summons came. Mr. Gladstone stood on the topmost rung of the ladder. He was Prime Minister of England!

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

### *PRIME MINISTER.*

“As he stands on the height of his life, with a glimpse of a height that is higher.”—TENNYSON.

“MY mission is to pacify Ireland.”

So Mr. Gladstone had said while wood-cutting at Hawarden on the eve of his Premiership. He now set to work to render justice to Ireland, to “soothe the wounded feelings and the painful recollections of her people.....to attach her to this island in the silken cords of love.” And the first step he proposed in this direction was that the Irish Church, as a State Church, must cease to exist.

“If we be prudent men,” he said in one of his most famous speeches on the subject, “I hope we shall endeavour, as far as in us lies, to make some provision for a contingent, a doubtful, and probably a dangerous future. If we be chivalrous men, I trust we shall endeavour to wipe away all those stains which the civilized world has for ages seen, or seemed to see, on the shield of England in her treatment of Ireland. If we be compassionate men, I hope we shall now, once for all, listen to the tale of woe which comes from her, and the reality of which, if not its justice, is testified by the continued migration of her people—that we shall endeavour to

‘Raze out the written troubles from her brain,  
Pluck from her memory the rooted sorrow.’

But, above all, if we be just men, we shall go forward in the name of truth and right, bearing this in mind—that when the case is proved, and the hour is come, justice delayed is justice denied.”

It was no easy matter carrying through this Bill, and it was not till July 26, 1869, that it received the royal assent.

These were golden days for the Liberal party. They were united, enthusiastic, victorious, full of energy, confidence, and hope. Great works of reform lay before them; while at their head was a statesman who, by his high principle, intense earnestness, and practical skill, was able to inspire, attract, and lead.

When the disestablishment of the Irish Church had been accomplished, Mr. Gladstone at once undertook to redress another Irish grievance. For nearly forty years the relations between landlords and tenants in Ireland had been discussed in Parliament with little or no result, till the difficult question was grappled with by Mr. Gladstone in 1870, and carried to a successful conclusion. These early years of Mr. Gladstone's Administration were years of tremendous energy in reform. The work of the session was enormous. He never spared himself when there was work to be done, and he never spared his officials either. It was difficult to keep pace with his rare capacity for work.

“Good heavens!” cried a well-known official one day, as he sank exhausted into a chair, “there is nothing left of me!”

“Why, what have you been doing?” asked his friend.

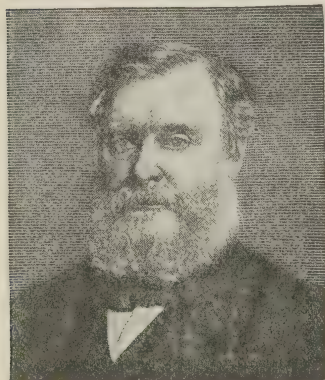
“Talking business with Mr. Gladstone for an hour!” was the answer.

Having settled Ireland for the moment, the energetic

Prime Minister now turned his attention to establishing a great system of national education for England.

Up to this time there had been no public system of elementary education in England; the State had doled out a grant to assist private charity in order to teach the children of the poor. Now a Bill was passed, mainly by the inspiration of Mr. Forster, which established for the first time a compulsory system of elementary education and instituted School Boards.

But the people soon grew tired of this flood of reformation; the breathless energy of the Prime Minister was almost too much for them. By 1871 it became apparent that the popularity of the Gladstonian Ministry was declining. Mr. Gladstone himself, who now represented Greenwich, had shown scant interest in the local affairs of his constituents; the air was heavy with threats and murmurs.



MR. FORSTER.

Mr. Gladstone, with characteristic courage, determined to meet the murmurers on their own ground—to face his constituents, explain the situation, and throw himself on the sympathies of the people.

It was a bleak October day when he stood bare-headed on Blackheath before twenty thousand persons.

When he appeared, peal after peal of cheering rent the air. There was a waving forest of hats. The cheering was too loud to last, and ever as it stopped a steady low hissing was audible. As the Premier of

all England stood forth bare-headed, intense silence fell upon the vast crowd. His first words were the signal for a tempest of noise. From all around the outskirts of the crowd rose something between a groan and a howl, while a burst of rapturous cheering tried to



*"Mr. Gladstone stood calm, resolute, patient."*

overmaster it. The battle raged between the two sounds ; while Mr. Gladstone stood calm, resolute, patient, looking straight upon the excited crowd. For a time it seemed as if he must be hooted down without speaking ; but at last he began. So carrying was his voice, that

all that great concourse of twenty thousand could hear his weighty words. It was not long before he had his audience with him ; for two whole hours they stood enthralled, while step by step he cleared away the fog of prejudice and mistaken ill-feeling that surrounded his actions. It was a splendid speech.

“Gentlemen,” he ended, “I shall go from this meeting, having given you the best account of my position in my feeble power.....I shall go from this meeting strengthened by the comfort of your kindness and your indulgence to resume my humble share in public labours.”

A tremendous burst of cheering greeted the political leader as he ended his oration, and the vast multitude melted away, determined to uphold his policy and stand by him through thick and thin.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

### *RETIREMENT.*

“Care not, you have done great work ; and if even now you rested, your name would be read in one of the fairest pages of English history.”

TENNYSON to GLADSTONE, 1874.

BUT the end was not far off. Mr. Gladstone had lived hard. He had accomplished in four sessions an amount of work which would have lasted most Prime Ministers through four Parliaments. His economy of time was carried into every part of his life, public and private. He used to say that it took him five minutes exactly to dress for dinner, and when alluding to this habit of dressing quickly, he was wont to quote Sidney Herbert, “I take five minutes if I potter,” because, if necessary, he could be ready in three minutes.



There is a story told of him, which, if it is a little trivial, shows how he economized his time. He was going to drive into Chester one day, from Hawarden, after luncheon. His pudding was very hot, so he went away from the table, changed his clothes, got ready for the drive, and returned to finish his lunch, thus saving the precious minutes during which his pudding cooled!

But to return to the close of the five years of brilliant reform he had carried through for England—the Golden Age of Liberalism, as it has been called.

An attempt to settle the question of higher education in Ireland, in the Irish University Bill, brought matters to a crisis. It was admitted to be ingenious, but it satisfied no one.

“Mr. Gladstone rose with the House dead against him and his Bill, and made a wonderful speech—easy, almost playful, with passages of great power and eloquence,” said Mr. Forster; and two days later he added, when the Bill had been thrown out by three votes,—

“Cabinet again at twelve. Decided to resign. Mr. Gladstone made us quite a touching little speech. He began playfully. This was the last of some one hundred and fifty Cabinets or so, and he wished to say to his colleagues with what profound gratitude—and here he completely broke down and could say nothing. Tears came to my eyes, and we were all touched.”

On January 23, 1874, when Mr. Gladstone was confined to the house by a cold, he suddenly announced the dissolution of Parliament, because, as he said, his authority had now “sunk below the point necessary for the due defence and prosecution of the public interests.” If he were re-elected, he promised to repeal the income tax.

But he was not re-elected. He stood for Greenwich

again, but only to find himself second on the poll, which was headed by a local distiller.

And so the Golden Age of Liberalism was ended ; the Liberal chief was free to do as he liked.

"It would take very little to make me retire from public life," he had said two years before. "Office has no attraction for me, except when I am dealing with important questions. The administrative routine of ordinary government work, except in connection with some great measure, does not attract me, and any one else can do it as well."

Before the new Parliament had met for the rather humdrum work which lay before it, Mr. Gladstone burst upon the world with a new surprise. He was going to retire altogether from public life !

"At the age of sixty-five, and after forty-two years of a laborious public life, I think myself entitled to retire," he wrote in the winter of 1875. "This retirement is dictated to me by my personal views as to the best method of spending the closing years of my life."

"Gentlemen," said Burke, when he was addressing the House for the last time, "I have had my day."

Had Mr. Gladstone, then, had *his* day ? Was this to be the end ? Complaints arose all around. He had pleaded old age, but he seemed the very embodiment of strength, and spirit, and energy. His party represented themselves as sheep having no shepherd ; they complained that he had led them on, and they had followed him, followed him faithfully and devotedly, and now he was leaving them. To whom ?

His doctor affirmed that, after such years of laborious work, retirement would be physically bad for him.

"Dr. Clark does not know how completely I should employ myself," answered Mr. Gladstone firmly.

Here was his secret. Retirement for him did not mean rest. His recreation was merely a change of work ; it was not idleness. If he was not legislating for the country, he had other work to do.

His life had been a continuous round of exhausting work. Even his iron constitution was at last beginning to show signs of wear and tear. His private affairs, too, required his personal attention, for little enough could he give during his terms of office. The absorption of a Prime Minister in the work of a nation leaves him very little time for domestic intercourse. Mrs. Gladstone used to complain that she saw nothing of her husband, inso-much that at an evening party she would constantly try to get near him, so that she might have some conversation with him.

Now that he had leisure, having resigned the leadership of the Liberal party, Mr. Gladstone devoted himself to the further study of theology, especially to the state of the Church of England.

A pamphlet on "The Vatican Decrees in their Bearing on Civil Allegiance" was the first sign of his energy in this direction. It roused a great controversy at the time, and Mr. Gladstone was bitterly assailed for such free expression of his opinions.

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## CHAPTER XX.

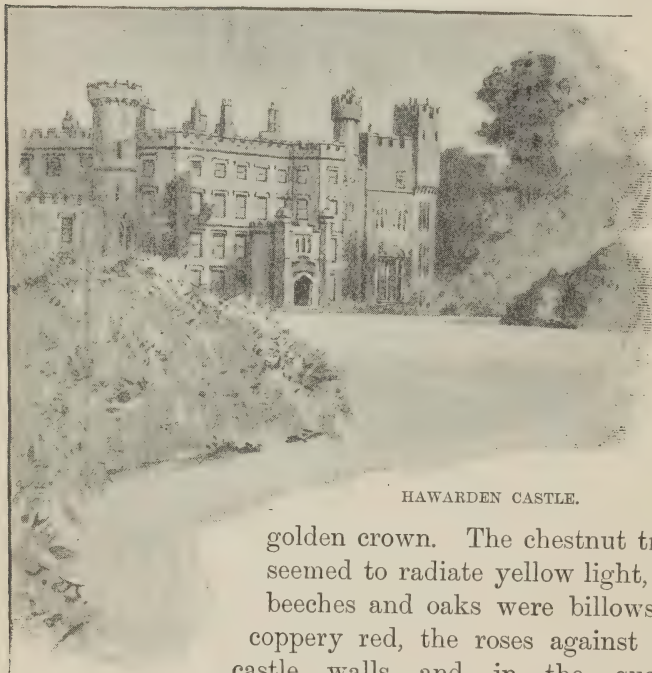
### *LIFE AT HAWARDEN.*

"Change of labour is, to a great extent, the healthiest form of recreation."  
GLADSTONE.

IT was to his home at Hawarden Castle that Mr. Gladstone retired for a well-won rest in 1874. The castle stands in "a delightful corner of Cheshire," about half

a mile from the quiet little village on the hill-top, the blue smoke rising from the snug little cottages, which seem to have but little other signs of life. Here is a simple account of the home where Mr. Gladstone passed so many years of "the evening of his days":—

"Hawarden Park stood in all the glory of October's



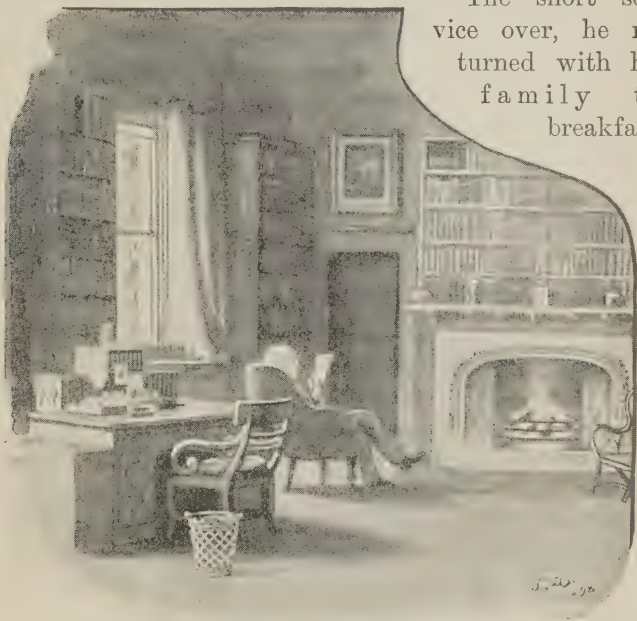
HAWARDEN CASTLE.

golden crown. The chestnut trees seemed to radiate yellow light, the beeches and oaks were billows of coppery red, the roses against the castle walls and in the quaint Italian gardens were still in bloom; and amidst these very silent, very beautiful scenes, Mr. Gladstone leads his simple life among his own friends, and with a constant stream of visitors, not one of whom leaves Hawarden Castle without being more than ever impressed with Mr. Gladstone's marvellous vitality."

After years of such hard work, it would have been

quite natural if Mr. Gladstone, at the age of sixty-five, had treated himself to some small luxuries. But his manner of living, whether in office or out of office, was Spartan in its simplicity. At a quarter to eight, every morning of his life at Hawarden, he walked to church. He refused any refreshment. He refused any company. He walked that half-mile to church alone.

The short service over, he returned with his family to breakfast.



THE "TEMPLE OF PEACE," HAWARDEN.

Here again extreme simplicity prevailed. Apart from his medical orders, he disliked anything but the plainest fare, and usually breakfasted on fish. Having absorbed the contents of several newspapers, he went off to his library, now so well known as the "Temple of Peace."



He never smoked. He belonged to the older school, and formed his habits at a time when tobacco-smoking was looked on as a somewhat vulgar performance.

The library, where he spent his day, was no show place. It was filled with books of every size, and on every subject. The books were ingeniously arranged, so that not one of them was hidden behind another, but the titles could be seen at a glance by any one with good eyesight. The books were all arranged according to subject, and not according to size. Everything was in its right place, though the room was so much lived in. Papers were tied up in neat bundles, and labelled in Mr. Gladstone's own handwriting.

Three writing-tables stood in the library. At one Mrs. Gladstone wrote her letters; the second, standing between two windows, was Mr. Gladstone's political desk; the third was his literary writing-table, in a niche by the window, the most peaceful corner in that Temple of Peace. The whole table was covered with books of reference. Here he sat absorbed in his work, now writing rapidly and eagerly for some minutes, now throwing down his pen and dipping deep into one of the books lying on the table near him. His concentration was marvellous. People might come and go in his room; he worked on, undisturbed by voices. Whatever the work he had in hand, it took hold of him so entirely that he had to be roused from it as most people are roused from sleep.

As the gong sounded for lunch, and not till then, he would lay down his pen. Punctuality at meals, as in all things, was his habit; and he was soon seated at the head of his table, conversing on all topics of the day with those present. After a light meal he would return

to his library, and be soon as deeply absorbed in his work as before.

Later in the day Mr. Gladstone would take his much-needed exercise. With his axe, and usually accompanied by one or more members of his family, he would saunter forth wood-cutting. He never cut down a tree wantonly for the mere sake of exercise. Sometimes the fate of a tree at Hawarden hung in the balance for years. The



opinion of the family was consulted; visitors were asked to contribute advice. Mr. Ruskin once sealed the fate of an oak; Sir John Millais decided on the removal of an elm.

Mr. Gladstone wielded the axe with the skill of an experienced woodman. Many are the stories told of his wood-cutting.

"We are very proud of our trees," he said one day

to a party of tourists; "and we are therefore getting anxious, as this beech has already shown symptoms of decay. We set great store by our trees."

"Why then do you cut 'em down as you do?" roared one of the lads.

"We cut down that we may improve. We remove rottenness that we may restore health by letting in air and light. As a good Liberal, you ought to understand that."

His generosity in throwing Hawarden Park open to visitors was greatly appreciated in the neighbourhood; but the general public took undue advantage of his kindness. They picked his flowers, they carved their names on his walls, they took chips from his trees, and even cut his name out of his Bible in Hawarden Church.

The end of Mr. Gladstone's day at Hawarden was in keeping with the rest. On quiet evenings, after dinner, when there were no visitors at the castle, he would sit and chat with various members of his family. Shortly after ten his day was over, and, with the regularity of a child, he would go off to bed at his appointed hour.

Such was the simplicity of Mr. Gladstone's life. True indeed of his own life are the words he applied to the lives of others: "In the sphere of common experience, we see some human beings live and die, and furnish by their life no special lessons visible to man, but only that general teaching, in elementary and simple forms, which is deducible from every particle of human histories. Others there have been who, from the time when their young lives first, as it were, peeped over the horizon, seemed at once to

'Flame in the forehead of the morning sky'—

whose lengthening years have been but one growing splendour, and who at last—

'Leave a lofty name,  
A light, a landmark, on the cliffs of fame.'

## CHAPTER XXI.

*SOME OF GLADSTONE'S SAYINGS.*

"BE slow to stir inquiries which you do not mean particularly to pursue to their proper end."

"Be not afraid to suspend your judgment, or feel and admit to yourselves how narrow are the bounds of knowledge."

"How are we to make ourselves believe, and how are we to bring the country to believe, that in the sight of God and man labour is honourable and idleness is contemptible?"

"It is written in the eternal laws of the universe of God that sin shall be followed by suffering."

"An unjust war is a tremendous sin."

"The day will arrive—come it soon or come it late—when the people of England will discover that national injustice is the surest road to national downfall."

"Let us still remember that there is a voice which is not heard in the crackling of the fire, or in the roaring of the whirlwind or the storm, but which will and must be heard when they have passed away—the still, small voice of justice."

"Even as the night following the day lulls the weary limbs of all animated nature into sleep."

"It is no pleasure to us standing on the shore to see others labouring in the storm."

"Taste is nothing in the world except the faculty which devises according to lines of beauty, executes according to lines of beauty, judges according to lines of beauty."

"The English poetry of the nineteenth century has

been at the head of the poetry of the world in this nineteenth century."

"Whatever the Greek produced in ancient days he made as useful as he could, and at the same time, according as it lay with him, he made it as beautiful as he could."

"British art is in close affinity with the national character, founding itself in the individuality of the individual man, and seeking in its strength the surest foundations of national greatness."

"My duty is to bring out the truth."

"We are all mortal: somebody or other will succeed to what we leave behind us."

"Be assured that every one of you, without exception, has his place and vocation on this earth, and that it rests with himself to find it."

"Do not believe those who too lightly say that nothing succeeds like success. Effort—honest, manful, humble effort—succeeds, by its reflected action upon character, especially in youth, better than success."

"It is written in legible characters, and with a pen of iron, on the rock of human destiny, that, within the domain of practical politics, the people must in the main be passive."

"It is the office of law and of institutions to reflect the wants and wishes of the country. Then, as the nation passes from a stationary into a progressive period, it will justly require that the changes in its own condition and views should be represented in the professions and actions of its leading men; for they exist for its sake, not it for theirs."

"It remains, indeed, their business, now and ever, to take honour and duty for their guide, and not the mere demand or purpose of the passing hour. But honour



and duty themselves require their loyal servant to take account of the state of facts in which he is to work; and, while ever labouring to elevate the standard of opinion and action around him, to remember that his business is not to construct, with self-chosen materials, an Utopia or a republic of Plato, but to conduct the affairs of a living and working community of men, who have self-government recognized as in the last resort the moving spring of their political life and of the institutions which are its outward vesture."

"There is no precedent in human history for a formation like the British Empire. A small island, at one extremity of the globe, peoples the whole earth with its colonies. Not satisfied with that, it goes among the ancient races of Asia, and subjects two hundred and forty millions of men to its rule. Along with all this it disseminates over the world a commerce such as no imagination ever conceived in former times, and such as no poet ever painted. And all this it has to do with the strength that lies within the narrow limits of these shores."

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## CHAPTER XXII.

### *JUSTICE FOR BULGARIA.*

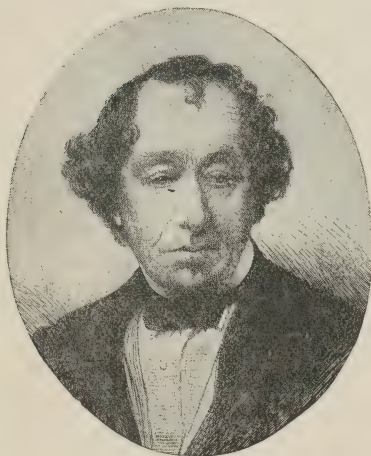
"Where was Roderick then?  
One blast upon his bugle-horn  
Were worth a thousand men!"—SCOTT.

WHILE Mr. Gladstone was thus living in retirement, at Hawarden, among his books and his friends, England was being stirred to the depths by the course affairs were taking in the East.

In 1876 an insurrection had broken out in Bulgaria.

It had been suppressed by the Turkish Government, but a hideous massacre had followed. Rumours reached Constantinople of the wholesale slaughter of women and children in Bulgaria. The Constantinople correspondent of *The Daily News* investigated the evidence and found it too true. A few days later accounts were laid before the British public of the deeds, which have since been known as the "Bulgarian atrocities."

Mr. Disraeli, the Prime Minister, treated the terrible



MR. DISRAELI.

stories with a levity which jarred harshly on the ears of almost all his listeners. It was plain he did not believe them, or attach the slightest importance to them. But the subject was too serious for such light-minded treatment.

While Mr. Disraeli sneered at the rumours, and the leader of the Liberal party, Lord Hartington, was weighing carefully the situation,

the English people rose in disgust at the accounts of horrible cruelty which reached them. The agitation was as an "uprising of the English people." But it was an uprising without a leader. They were as sheep having no shepherd. Where was their leader? Where—

"Where was Roderick then?  
One blast upon his bugle-horn  
Were worth a thousand men!"

Then it was that Gladstone "rushed forth" from his peaceful library at Hawarden, and, "flinging aside" his books, sounded a tremendous note upon his bugle-horn. He addressed meetings, he wrote pamphlets, he cried on Christian England to act promptly, and end these horrors; he denounced the crimes of Turkey, and the policy that could support Turkey, with an eloquence that for a time set England aflame.

"What profits it, O England, to prevail  
In camp and mart and council, and bestrew  
With sovereign argosies the subject blue,  
And wrest thy tribute from each golden gale,  
If, in thy strongholds, thou canst hear the wail  
Of maidens martyred by the turbaned crew  
Whose tenderest mercy was the sword that slew,  
And lift no hand to wield the purging flail?"

This was the substance of his cry, and his inspiring influence soon made itself felt both inside and outside the House.

"The reason of all this passion," says Mr. Russell, "is not difficult to discover. Mr. Gladstone is a humane man: the Turkish tyranny is founded on cruelty. He is a worshipper of freedom: the Turk is a slave-owner. He is a lover of peace: the Turk is nothing if not a soldier. He is a disciple of progress: the Turkish Empire is a synonym for retrogression."

For four years he "sustained the high and holy strife" with a versatility, a courage, and a resource which raised the enthusiasm of his followers to the highest pitch.

"My purpose," he said at Oxford, "is day and night, week by week, month by month, to counter-work what I believe to be the purpose of Lord Beaconsfield."

As the general election approached, one question

alone was asked of the electors—"Do you approve or condemn Lord Beaconsfield's system of foreign policy?"

The answer was given at Easter 1880. Mr. Gladstone himself, standing for Midlothian, was returned with enthusiasm at the head of the poll. Lord Beaconsfield's Ministry received the most emphatic condemnation, and the Liberals were returned in an overwhelming majority.

Mr. Gladstone was the unquestioned chief, the idol and the pride of the victorious army of Liberals.

On the resignation of Lord Beaconsfield, the Queen sent for Lord Hartington, as nominal leader of the Liberal party in the House of Commons. He could do nothing, and Her Majesty sent for Lord Granville. The two statesmen travelled together to Windsor Castle. They both assured the Queen that the victory was Mr. Gladstone's, and his alone; that the Liberal party would be satisfied with no other leader. They returned to London the same afternoon, and called on Mr. Gladstone. He was expecting them and their message. Without a moment's delay he went down to Windsor. That evening he kissed hands, and returned to London as Prime Minister for the second time. He was now seventy-one when he set to work with energy to form his government. With such a splendid Liberal majority, what might he not yet do for England?

"With a well-trimmed ship, splendidly manned, and the full breeze of popular favour behind it, Mr. Gladstone's second Administration set out on what promised to be a pleasant and prosperous voyage."

But alas for the pleasant and prosperous voyage, which was to end in final shipwreck!

## CHAPTER XXIII.

*A BREAKDOWN.*

“The feeling, thinking, acting man.”—CLEON.

MR. GLADSTONE was a strong man, but he was now over seventy, and the wear and tear of his life was tremendous. He had been through the Midlothian campaign—no light work for a man of his years; he had arranged his new Cabinet, and stood through the strain of the first session, spending his evenings and a great part of his nights in the heated atmosphere of the House of Commons. He was so “terribly in earnest” in everything, that the strain was all the greater.

At length the time came when Mr. Gladstone had to confess himself beaten. On the third of August 1880 the news thrilled through England that the Prime Minister was ill. The next news was that he was suffering from high fever, and was lying seriously ill at Downing Street. Sympathy flowed in from all sides, from the Queen downwards to the poorest in the land. The illness of Mr. Gladstone formed the one topic of conversation through those long August days in London. But with his great strength and tough constitution he made a good recovery, and by the end of the month he was strong enough to go for a trip round England, as the guest of Sir Donald Currie, in one of the great mail steamers that ply between England and the Cape, the *Grantully Castle*.

There were great rejoicings at the Premier's recovery, and the following lines from *Punch*, of this date, are typical of the country's feelings:—



“Hurrah ! But, William mine, be wise, beware !  
Give not e’en tempered steel *too* sore a trial.  
The nation urges you, ‘Take rest ! take care !’  
And will not brook denial.”

The *Grantully Castle*, with Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone and several members of the family on board, steamed round the Devonshire coast to Plymouth, and on to Kingstown, where the Premier was received with loud cheers by an enthusiastic crowd. The streets of Dublin were lined with people, all anxious to catch a glimpse of the statesman who had done his best to do them justice by his legislation.

One is reminded of the conversation between the American and Englishman on the subject of the Prime Minister going over to America.

“What reception would you give Mr. Gladstone in your country ?” asked the Englishman.

“He would never be allowed to land,” was the answer.

“What do you mean ?” asked the Englishman, somewhat puzzled.

“Because when the time of his arrival was known there would be a solid block of men that would stretch right back from New York to Chicago, and it would be impossible so to break it up as to give Mr. Gladstone room to get on shore.”

Everywhere the Premier was received with enthusiasm. He received addresses, he spoke to deputations, he seemed in the best of health and spirits. The *Grantully Castle* returned home in September. His speech on landing savoured of light-heartedness:—

“You have only to look round amongst us to see if the excursion has done us any good. I remember a very famous caricature, which perhaps none of you have seen or heard of before. This caricature, in one part, represented an Englishman when he was setting out on

his travels—pale, wan, and meagre ; while the other part showed him wheeled in a wheelbarrow because he was too fat to walk. We have not had time to undergo that change ; but I believe there are none of us who are not better for our delightful change.”

Well indeed for him that he had had a good rest and change, for the work before him was almost terrific in its immensity.

Mr. Gladstone had inherited responsibilities from the last government which were by no means easy to settle. One of these cropped up in the very early days of his Premiership, and his settlement of the Transvaal question gave rise to tremendous controversy, and has never been forgiven him by a large number of English people. When Mr. Gladstone came into power he found the Transvaal seething with a sense of injustice for the action of the last government—the hoisting of the British flag over their land by Sir Theophilus Shepstone in 1877. They had been assured at the time that the Transvaal for the future would remain “an integral portion of Her Majesty’s dominions in South Africa,” and that “so long as the sun shines the Transvaal would remain British territory.” But the sun kept on shining, and the Transvaal, under Gladstone’s Administration, ceased to be British territory.

In vain deputations of Boers had come over to England to plead for deliverance from what they called an act of tyranny. But now in Mr. Gladstone they found a sympathizer. He openly denounced the policy that had led to the annexation of the Transvaal. He described the Boers as “a people vigorous, obstinate, and tenacious in character, even as we are ourselves.”

Before the new Government had been in power nine months, the Transvaal was up in arms, declaring her-

self once more a republic. Still adhering outwardly to the policy of the last Administration, British troops were sent against them. The disaster of Majuba Hill is a well-known story: our troops fled, our officers were killed, our soldiers shot down by the Boers. There was an outcry in England for troops to be sent to reduce the Transvaal Republic to humiliation, to wipe out the disgrace of Majuba Hill.

But Mr. Gladstone thought otherwise. He did not see any credit or glory in killing a large number of Boers in order to satisfy our heroic sense of honour. The glory of England, according to him, was that England should prove herself to be just, and fair, and Christian. It had been, he thought, an act of injustice to seize the Transvaal, and therefore he gave them back their independence. He sent out Sir Evelyn Wood with orders to come to honourable terms of peace with the Boers, which he did, and the Transvaal Republic was once more independent.

"He had asked," said Mr. M'Carthy, speaking of Mr. Gladstone at this time—"he had asked of his own mind and heart and conscience what was the right thing to do, and he had done it. It was a brave act. But it was an act only in keeping with the whole of Mr. Gladstone's career."

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

### *STORM AND STRESS.*

"Oh, 'tis a burden, Cromwell,  
Too heavy for a man who hopes for heaven."—SHAKESPEARE.

So Mr. Gladstone had written in his diary in 1880, when he became Prime Minister for the second time.

The few months he had been in office had shown in what a sympathetic spirit he had entered the well-known words.

In the autumn of 1881 he made a very celebrated speech at Leeds, defending his Transvaal policy, which had been very vigorously condemned.

"And we who are now in government as your agents," he concluded, "will do the best and utmost and latest of our power—while studying peace with all the world, while endeavouring to persuade men into the observance of the laws of justice and equality—never to forget what is due to the dignity of the throne of Queen Victoria; and neither in east nor west, neither in north nor south, shall it be said truly of us that the concessions which we make are concessions wrung from fear, or shall there be a doubt of our determination, to the best of our ability, to maintain the laws at home and the dignity of the empire throughout the world."

On the wall of the Banqueting Hall at Leeds, glittering in jets of light, were Tennyson's words, "He revered his conscience as his king;" while more than one poem was addressed to him by his enthusiastic audience, showing that there were some at least who appreciated his Transvaal conduct.

"Thy thought, O poet, writ in light at Leeds,  
 Thence flashed to all the English-speaking race,  
 And, pointed by his presence whose great deeds  
 Inwrought in England's history we trace,  
 Shines like a guiding star, from the high place  
 Where *Truth* with clear-eyed *Duty* sits enshrined  
 In royal dignity and queenly grace,  
 Sole rightful Mistress of the human mind.  
 Through all the toils and dangers of the way—  
 Fierce faction hate and rancorous party strife—  
 Thank God! that England's foremost son doth lay  
 Upon that shrine the homage of a life  
 Pure in its motive, lofty in its aim!  
 And *Truth* for aye will guard our *Gladstone's* name."

But worse stumbling-blocks even than the Transvaal lay before the government.

Ireland was, as usual, in trouble, and Mr. Gladstone, as usual, ready to turn his attentions to lessening the trouble, if they would only be patient. But the Irish party had got a new leader in Mr. Parnell, the most powerful Parliamentary figure that had arisen in Irish history for some time. Parnell's dream for Ireland was a National Parliament in Dublin. He was impatient, and not to be set aside by Mr. Gladstone's promises for the future.

"If you will not listen to our Irish national claim," said Mr. Parnell, "then we will not allow you to discuss any other question whatever, if we can prevent the discussion."

He carried this system of obstruction through everything; he made it his sole business in life.

Meanwhile matters in Ireland only grew from bad to worse. Irishmen had believed that a Liberal Government would have been their friend; they began to lose all faith in English statesmanship. The author of the Land Act of 1870 was in power, and he was doing nothing to mend matters—so they thought. As soon as possible Mr. Gladstone pushed through a new Land Act for Ireland; but it was quite inadequate.

Mr. Forster, the Chief Secretary, was growing desperate. His attitude was one of antagonism towards the Irish people. He imprisoned any one who was suspected of disturbing the country; amongst others Mr. Parnell was imprisoned.

The whole situation at last became impossible. Mr. Parnell was released. Mr. Forster resigned, and a new Chief Secretary, Lord Frederick Cavendish, was appointed.



This all happened in the early summer of 1882.

"My mission is to pacify Ireland," Mr. Gladstone had said, some four-and-twenty years before this. His mission did not seem to be fulfilled yet.

On Saturday, the sixth of May, the newly-appointed Viceroy of Ireland, Lord Spencer, made his state entry into Dublin together with Lord Frederick Cavendish, the newly-appointed Chief Secretary, a very dear friend of Mr. Gladstone's.

It was a fair summer evening, and the Chief Secre-



PHOENIX PARK, DUBLIN, SHOWING VICEREGAL LODGE.

tary, together with his Under-Secretary, were walking quietly through the Phoenix Park, when some ruffians attacked them and murdered them in cold blood. On Sunday morning, when the news became known in England, a thrill of horror passed over the country.

A wild outcry was raised against Mr. Parnell and his party. Mr. Parnell openly denounced any part in such foul play, and wrote at once a frank and friendly letter

to Mr. Gladstone, offering to retire from Parliament and public life altogether, if he thought it better.

Mr. Gladstone refused to accept such a sacrifice, and advised Mr. Parnell to stick to his post, which he did; and from this time dates a friendship between the Prime Minister and the leader of the Irish party, Mr. Parnell.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### *GATHERING CLOUDS.*

“’Tis not in mortals to command success;  
But we’ll do more, Sempronius—we’ll deserve it.”—ADDISON.

MEANTIME the Liberal Government had got into trouble about the British occupation of Egypt.



GENERAL GORDON.

It was but a month after the Phoenix Park murders that there was an uprising in Egypt against the Khedive, under the leadership of Arabi Pasha. The British Government took the side of the Khedive, and the British fleet bombarded Alexandria. Events followed quickly. Arabi was defeated at the battle of Tel-el-Kebir, and Egypt was occupied by the British.

In 1883 troubles in Egypt thickened. The Mahdi was a growing power out in the Soudan, and must be checked. General Gordon, whose name has become a household word, was sent off to Khartoum in January.

He had entered his old capital on February 18, 1884, received with every expression of joy by the natives. His proceedings had been watched with an ever-increasing interest by all England. The striking personality of the man had raised him into a popular hero in the public imagination.

How intense became the situation at Khartoum, how pitiful Gordon's prayers for help, how loud the popular cry for troops to be sent, how the long-delayed expedition arrived too late—all these are matters of very recent history.

The news of Gordon's death aroused an outburst of indignation against the government, which was held responsible for it. Events told heavily against Mr. Gladstone. The Prime Minister was abused on all sides. The public clamoured for a change; the Queen wrote of the "stain left upon England."

It was the last misfortune of the Liberal Ministry; the once magnificent majority declined.

On Friday, the 5th of June, we hear of Mr. Gladstone "pale and worried." Two of his Ministry had resigned, and he nervously toyed with a sheet of notepaper which contained the terms in which he must announce this fact to the House. Rising at eleven, he delivered one of his most remarkable speeches. He looked ashen-grey, and there was a lassitude in his manner, as if he were weary of incessant labour and gasping for the holiday near at hand. Yet, though he seemed in the last stage of physical exhaustion, there was no sign of failing power in the skill and force with which he met the battery arrayed against him.

It was on June 8, 1885, that the government was beaten. Great was the excitement in the House when the numbers were announced. One member, Lord

Randolph Churchill, celebrated the occasion by jumping on to the bench where he had been sitting, and, standing there, or rather dancing there, he waved his hat madly round and round his head, and cheered in tones of wild exultation. Some of his friends caught at him and tried to drag him down, but his enthusiasm was irrepressible.



*"Great was the excitement in the House."*

"I have tried every form of excitement in my time," he said afterwards, "from tip-cat to tiger-shooting, but I have never been in at anything so exciting as last night."

When comparative silence had been restored, Mr. Gladstone rose and moved the adjournment of the House.

The following day he placed his resignation in the hands of the Queen. The five years of his second Premiership were over.

The work had indeed been peculiarly trying. Mr. Gladstone, with his threescore and ten years, bore more than his full burden of the day's work. He had been in his place early and late; his dinner hour had been reduced to just half an hour. He was often at his post between two and three in the morning, after a turbulent night. Rest was badly needed.

The Queen thought that this defeat of Mr. Gladstone marked his final retirement. Others shared her opinion that his fighting days were over. He was offered an earldom, but he refused. He had made his name famous, and he would keep it—

“With none but Manhood's ancient order starred,  
Nor crowned with titles less august and old  
Than human greatness.”

Neither had he any thoughts of retiring at this time. Justice, he considered, had not yet been done to Ireland.

An appeal was made to the country, and Mr. Gladstone issued an address to the electors of Midlothian. His address closed with these emphatic words: “History will consign to disgrace the name of every man who, having it in his power, does not aid, or prevents or retards, an equitable settlement between Ireland and Great Britain.”

Mr. Gladstone was elected for Midlothian by an immense and overwhelming majority. His programme of trying to pacify Ireland had received the consent of the British nation. He had failed again and again; but they were yet confident that he would succeed in bringing peace and happiness to that unhappy country.



## CHAPTER XXVI.

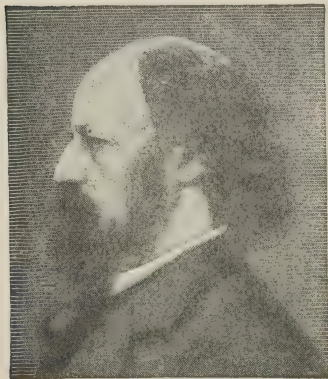
*GLADSTONE AND TENNYSON.*

“Can we forget one friend? Can we forget one face  
Which cheered us toward our end, which nerved us for our race?”

KINGSLEY.

It is refreshing to turn aside from the atmosphere of politics to the friendship between the greatest statesman and the greatest poet in the reign of Queen Victoria.

They first met, as quite young men, a few months after the death of Arthur Hallam. Gladstone having been his closest school friend, Tennyson had an almost romantic desire to see him.



TENNYSON.

“It was about the year 1837 when he called on me in Carlton Gardens,” says Mr. Gladstone. “This was an unexpected honour, for I had no other tie with him than having been in earlier life the friend of his

friend, to whom he afterwards erected so splendid a literary monument.”

A warm friendship sprang up between the two men. In July 1871 we find the Gladstones staying at Aldworth with the Tennysons, Mr. Gladstone listening with full appreciation to the poet reading his “Holy Grail” aloud. The day after their arrival they all walked to Blackdown—Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone frisking about like a boy and girl in the heather, according to the poet’s account.

He describes the statesman as a very noble fellow, and perfectly unaffected, a man of versatile mind and great impulsiveness. But, adds Tennyson, "One could not but feel humbled in the presence of those whose life was evidently one long self-sacrifice.....Mrs. Gladstone wears herself out by all her hospital work, in addition to the work of a Prime Minister's wife. Her daughter helps her, and helps her brother also in his bad Lambeth parish."

A few years later we get a picture of the return visit, when the poet and his wife arrived at Hawarden Castle in the autumn of 1876. Here, while the autumn tints touched to a golden glory the old trees in the Hawarden Park, and the sunlight lay broad over the sea-blown land, the poet and statesman discussed the large topics of the world which lay near to the hearts of both. They spoke of the great Italian poet Dante, whom both had learned to love; they spoke of Gladstone's latest speech and the poet's latest song, until Tennyson returned to his winter quarters at Farringford, and wrote to his hostess: "We retain golden memories of our visit to Hawarden, and your statesman, not like Diocletian among his cabbages, but among his oaks, axe in hand."

As time passed on they grew further and further apart in politics.

"I love Gladstone, but I hate his Irish policy," Tennyson was known to exclaim.

Gladstone would try to convert him to see the gratitude of Ireland to England. "Some Irish labourers," he told him one day, "came over to England to help with the English harvest. A Yorkshire farmer lent them a barn to sleep in. Next season, when they came over, they carried on their shoulders, each by turn, a keg of whisky as a present to their host."

But Tennyson had been in Ireland, and he did not

believe in the genuine gratitude of Ireland, as a nation, to England.

In the autumn of 1883 they both went for a holiday



MR. GLADSTONE AND LORD TENNYSON IN  
THE "PEMBROKE CASTLE."

cruise in the *Pembroke Castle*. Thousands of people lined the shore as they embarked, cheering in turn for "Gladstone" and "Tennyson." Both men were "as jovial together as boys out for a holiday, but they took good care to keep off the quagmire of politics." They passed the grand headlands of Skye; they landed and drove between "ferny, heathery hills" with wild grey

crag; they listened to the music of rushing rivers, and thought the whole landscape more beautiful than anything they had ever seen. And both men were seventy-four, within four months of each other!

At Kirkwall a speech was called for, to which Mr. Gladstone responded, speaking for himself and the poet. His words were generous and fine. "Mr. Tennyson's life and labours correspond in point of time as nearly as possible to my own," he said; "but Mr. Tennyson's exertions have been on a higher plane of human action than my own. He has worked in a higher field, and his work will be more durable. We public men play a part which places us much in view of our countrymen; it is our business to speak, but the words which we speak have wings and fly away and disappear. In distant times some may ask with regard to the Prime Minister, 'Who was he, and what did he do? We know nothing about him.' The work of Mr. Tennyson is of a higher order. The Poet Laureate has written his own song on the hearts of his countrymen that can never die."

They went over to Copenhagen, and passed between Denmark and Sweden, entertaining the King and Queen of Denmark on board, the Czar and Czarina, the King and Queen of Greece, and many other interesting people.

It was on this voyage that Mr. Gladstone urged on Tennyson to accept a peerage, wishing thus "publicly to proclaim the position which literature ought to hold in the world's work."

Though usually avoiding politics, Tennyson once expressed himself strongly to his political friend in verse:—

"Steersman, be not precipitate in thine act  
Of steering, for the river here, my friend,  
Parts in two channels, moving to one end—  
This goes straight forward to the cataract;  
That streams about the bend:

But though the cataract seem the nearer way,  
Whate'er the crowd on either bank may say,  
Take thou the 'bend,' 'twill save thee many a day." \*

Four years before Gladstone, Lord Tennyson passed away. His love for the great statesman remained to the end, and only a few hours before his death he turned to his son, saying,—

"Have I not been walking with Gladstone in the garden and showing him my trees?"

Both now lie in Westminster Abbey, among the great and brave of our land.

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## CHAPTER XXVII.

### *OTHER OLD FRIENDS.*

"Souls that have toiled and wrought and thought with me."

TENNYSON.

GLADSTONE was not a man of many friendships, but his friends were stanch and true to him as a man, if they could not follow him to the end with his politics. Now they were passing away one by one before him, leaving him a solitary figure in his old age. Arthur Hallam, the friend of his Eton days, had died long ago, at the early age of twenty-three.

"Far back in the distance of my early life, and upon a surface not yet ruffled by contention, there lies the memory of a friendship surpassing every other that has ever been enjoyed by one greatly blessed both in the number and the excellence of his friends." So wrote Mr. Gladstone, but a few months before his own death, of that friend he had loved and mourned with Tennyson so long ago.

\* By kind permission of Messrs. Macmillan.



Henry Manning, afterwards Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, was a very close friend during Gladstone's Oxford days, though his subsequent change to the Roman Catholic Church estranged them in later life. They read and walked together at Oxford; together they paid their first visit to Rome, in the winter of 1834. It is said that at this time Manning would have given anything to be in the political world, while Gladstone would have preferred the church. Gladstone noted with deep grief how, towards the year 1851, Manning and another friend, Hope, were leaning toward the Church of Rome; and when the news reached him that they had been received together into the Roman Church, his sorrow was overwhelming. "I feel as if I had lost my two eyes," he said sadly, realizing but too well the breach this step must necessarily make between the friends. "I should say," wrote one who knew him well, "that it touched the depths of his soul almost more than anything which has happened since."

It was indeed the parting of the ways. Henceforth the friendship between Gladstone and Manning was as between two men inhabiting separate worlds. Yet Cardinal Manning's letter to Mrs. Gladstone in 1889, on the occasion of her golden wedding, shows how deep and lasting was his affection still for his old friend.

"The last time we met you said, 'I do not forget old days,' and truly I can say so too. Therefore, in the midst of all who will be congratulating you on the fiftieth anniversary of your home-life, I cannot be silent. I have watched you both out on the sea of public tumults from my quiet shores. You know how nearly I have agreed in William's political career, especially in his Irish policy of the last twenty years .....We have had a long climb up those eighty

steps, and I hope we shall not 'break the pitcher at the fountain.'"

Another lifelong friend was Samuel Wilberforce, four years his senior, the wisest of counsellors, the strongest of supporters, the most faithful of friends. They had become acquainted with each other early in life; acquaintance soon ripened into friendship. The one became a bishop about the same time that the other became a Cabinet Minister; the friendship of both was sealed by common interests in the sphere of religion and the church.



JOHN BRIGHT.

On July 19, 1873, Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford, was killed by a sudden fall from his horse while riding in Surrey. We get a picture of the friends together for the last time, from an eye-witness. "Among those who came that Monday morning," he says, "was Mr. Gladstone; and well

the writer of these lines remembers the scene in that room: the peaceful body of the bishop, the lines of care and trouble smoothed out of the face, the beautiful smile of satisfaction, and, kneeling reverentially by that body, Mr. Gladstone, whose sobs attested how deeply his feelings were moved by the sudden loss of his long-tried friend."

One of his warmest friends was John Bright. It is no secret that one of the severest of the many trials resulting from Mr. Gladstone's convictions with regard

to Home Rule for Ireland was the estrangement which sprang up between Bright and himself.

"To think," said Mr. Bright to a friend one day—"to think, after we had trodden the same path together, shoulder to shoulder and hand in hand, we should be forced apart in the evening of our lives! And by what? By a bogey that has risen up within him, and is beckoning him away from duty and sense."

To the same friend, not long after, Mr. Gladstone was speaking.

"Ah," he said, when the subject of Mr. Bright turned up, "how did you find him?"

"Fairly well," was the answer; "and he spoke very affectionately of you, Mr. Gladstone."

"Did he indeed?" he replied sorrowfully—"did he indeed? Ah, that was a cruel blow—that, after a lifetime of mutual esteem, and of good work carried through together, we should be divided on so clear a question."

A lady was once abusing Mr. Gladstone and his policy to John Bright.

"Madam," interrupted his old friend and comrade, "let me counsel you to take your little boy to see Mr. Gladstone, in order that when he is an old man he may tell his children and grandchildren that he has seen the greatest Englishman he is ever likely to look upon."

When Bright was dying he received a long and sympathetic letter from his old friend Gladstone. He was too ill to write a reply to it himself, but he handled it fondly during the last days of his life, and after his death the letter was found under his pillow.

Mr. Gladstone paid a most splendid and touching tribute to his memory. "Mr. Bright," he exclaimed, "is entitled to a higher eulogy than any that could be

due to mere success. Of mere success he was indeed a conspicuous example; in intellect he might claim a distinguished place. But the character of the man lay deeper than his intellect, deeper than his eloquence, deeper than anything that could be described as seen upon the surface. The supreme eulogy which is his due is, I apprehend, that he lifted political life to a higher elevation and to a loftier standard."

Other friends he had, staunch and faithful and true, many of whom have been left to feel the blank in their lives from which that presence has been taken away.

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## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### *HOME RULE.*

"Lord of the golden tongue and smiting eyes,  
Great out of season, and untimely wise."—WATSON.

IN the summer of 1885, Mr. Gladstone, with his wife and daughter, took a much-needed holiday to Norway, on board the well-known little *Sunbeam* yacht, with its owners, Lord and Lady Brassey. But little enough leisure was to fall to the lot of the aged statesman. Though not in power, the Liberals were very strong under the commanding authority of Mr. Gladstone. A rumour was afloat, which quickly passed into a definite statement, that Mr. Gladstone had become a convert to the principles of Home Rule.

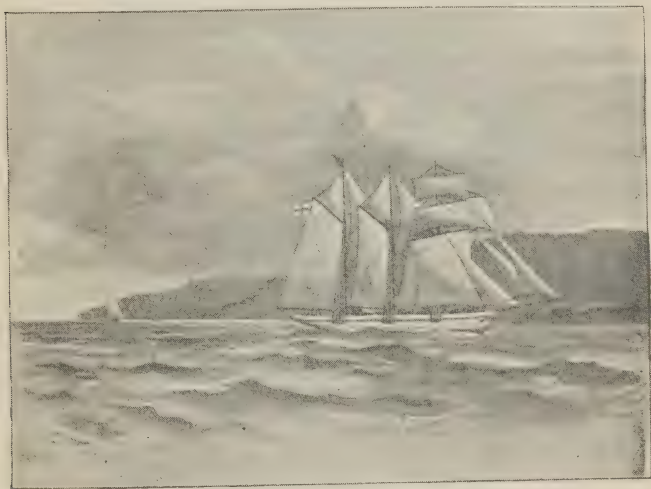
Some of his colleagues emphatically denied the statement. Mr. Gladstone himself was silent.

"As for myself," he said, "it is my duty at the present moment to think, and think, and think."

The result of this thinking was made known to the

world when, with the fall of the Conservative Government, Mr. Gladstone was asked to form a Ministry for the third time. To the electors of Midlothian, early in 1886, Mr. Gladstone betrayed his secret.

"The hope and purpose of the new government," he said, "in taking office, is to examine carefully whether it is not practicable to try some method of meeting the present case of Ireland and ministering to its wants,



THE "SUNBEAM."

more safe and more effectual, going nearer to the source and seat of the mischief, and offering more promise of stability, than the method of separate and restrictive criminal legislation."

On the eighth of April Mr. Gladstone moved in the House for leave to introduce his "Bill for the Better Government of Ireland."

When he had declared for Home Rule, the allegiance of his followers had been put to a severe test. Many



of his oldest and best friends felt obliged to forsake him. They echoed the words of Lord Tennyson when he said, "I love Gladstone, but I hate his Irish policy."

"It is all very dreary and unhappy just now," wrote one; "the G.O.M.\* persisting in his heroic enterprise in the teeth of everything and everybody, sure he is right, and apparently sure that he knows best the conditions of success. I cannot conceive how it will all end. But whether he is right or not, there is something to me unspeakably pathetic in his solitude."

Hardly ever had there been so intense an anxiety to listen to any ministerial statement as there was to hear Mr. Gladstone introduce his Home Rule Bill. It was arranged that the House of Commons should be opened for the admission of members as early as six o'clock in the morning. Many arrived at half-past five, and planted their backs to the doors, in order to be able to rush in at the moment when the doors were opened. A member who came down as late as seven had not the faintest chance of a good seat. The House was literally crammed from end to end.

When Mr. Gladstone entered the House from behind the Speaker's chair, at half-past four o'clock, he was received with the most enthusiastic cheering. He began his speech amid breathless silence, and spoke for three hours and a half. The scheme was a complicated one. It was based on two leading principles—Ireland was to have a Parliament of her own, and should have no representation in the Imperial Parliament at Westminster. But the House was not ready for such a sweeping scheme of reform. The Bill was thrown out on the second reading, early in June, by a majority of thirty, and after

\* G.O.M. stands for Grand Old Man.

five months of power Mr. Gladstone's third Administration was ended.

At this time he felt most deeply the desertion of many of his old friends, who had fought shoulder to



*"He began his speech amid breathless silence."*

shoulder with him, and had encouraged him in his schemes of reform.

An appeal to the country on the question of Home Rule was the next step. With voice and pen Mr. Gladstone, now seventy-six years old, entered on an extraordinary course of physical and mental efforts. His cause was defeated, but not abandoned.

His progress through Midlothian was a triumphant career, his speeches some of the best he had ever made; but the elections closed with a large majority against Home Rule. He was still convinced that he was right; his cause was good, and he felt sure that it must win in the end.

"I believe that what binds me to political life is justice to Ireland, and not only to political but physical life," he used to say at this time.

His attitude seems summed up in Mrs. Browning's words:—

"A great man (who was crowned one day)  
 Imagined a great Deed.  
 He shaped it out of cloud and clay,  
 He touched it finely, till the seed  
 Possessed the flowers; from heart and brain  
 He fed it with large thoughts humane,  
 To help a people's need.

But he stood sad before the sun  
 (The peoples felt their fate):  
 'The world is many—I am one;  
 My great Deed was too great.  
 God's fruit of justice ripens slow:  
 Men's souls are narrow; let them grow.  
 My brothers, we must wait.'"

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## CHAPTER XXIX.

### *HIS LAST FIGHT.*

"His voice is silent in your Council-hall  
 For ever."—TENNYSON.  
 "Unarm—the long day's task is done."

FOR six years after this the Home Rule Bill lay on the shelf. It had failed for one reason—because it proposed to exclude Ireland from representation in the Parliament

at Westminster. In Mr. Gladstone's second Home Rule measure Ireland was to be represented by eighty members in the House of Commons.

It was not till the year 1893 that he had an opportunity of introducing this second Bill. The Conservative Government under Lord Salisbury had come to an end in the summer of 1892, and a general election had given Mr. Gladstone a small majority.

During the years that had intervened between the two Bills blow after blow had fallen to hinder the cause, and it required a brave man indeed to carry on the scheme in the face of so much opposition and difficulty.

One of the greatest blows was the fall of Mr. Parnell, leader of the Irish party, in 1890. This was a keen disappointment to Mr. Gladstone, who had been a friend, and more than a friend, to this man; who had embraced the idea of Home Rule, and worked side by side with him to procure it.

Mr. Parnell died in 1891, just when it seemed more than possible that the Home Rule Bill might succeed.

Mr. Gladstone was eighty-two when he launched forth into his final Midlothian campaign. One of his first speeches was made at Chester, on his way northwards. A woman in the crowded streets threw a gingerbread nut at the statesman, and this struck him full in the eye. Though the eye became very painful, Mr. Gladstone courageously delivered his speech, and went through the whole election campaign. But for long the injured eye was under treatment.

The new Parliament, with Mr. Gladstone as Prime Minister for the fourth time, met on February 1, 1893. No time was lost in bringing in the Home Rule Bill. On the fourteenth, Mr. Gladstone rose in a densely-crowded house to ask leave to introduce what, through

the long fight, he had always called "A Bill for the Better Government of Ireland." The moment was one of supreme triumph. Out of the depths of opposition, forsaken by friends and colleagues, he had toiled upwards, till now he rose once more as Prime Minister with a Home Rule Bill in his hands.

From the Peers' Gallery the Prince of Wales looked down and listened; on his left sat the Duke of York. Foreign Ambassadors and Ministers crowded the Diplomatic Gallery. When Mr. Gladstone stood at the table, Liberal and Irish members sprang to their feet. The first sentences spoken by the Premier showed that he was still in full possession of his splendid voice. He spoke eloquently and earnestly for two hours.

"Sir," he ended, in a voice struggling with emotion, "it would be a misery to me if I had omitted in these closing years any measures possible for me to take towards upholding and promoting what I believe to be the cause.....of all parties and all nations inhabiting these islands. Let me entreat you," he added in a low voice—"if it were with my latest breath, I would entreat you—to let the dead bury its dead. Cast behind you every recollection of bygone evils; cherish, love, and sustain one another through all the vicissitudes of human affairs in the times that are to come."

The Bill passed, on its third reading, by a majority of thirty-four, only to be thrown out by the Lords after four days' debate.

Mr. Gladstone was now eighty-four, and the infirmities of old age were at last growing on him. At the beginning of 1894 he snatched a brief holiday at Biarritz. During his stay there his eyesight became rapidly worse. One day he took out his Herodotus; it had often accompanied him on his holidays before. The printed



page was the same, but he found he could no longer read it with any ease. Time had struck a blow in one of his tenderest parts.

His friends were not unprepared for his next step. On his return from abroad he attended his last Cabinet meeting, after which he tendered his resignation.

"God bless you all!" he had said, in a strong, deep, well-remembered voice, with the fervour of a mind accustomed to give every word its full value. A few days later he made his last speech as Prime Minister in the House of Commons. Few realized that this was his farewell to the House—that a knight was laying down his well-worn sword, hanging up his dented armour, to look for the future on the lists where others strove. Shortly after he sat down, Mr. M'Carthy met Mr. Morley in the lobby.

"Is that, then, the very last speech?" he asked.

"The very last," was Mr. Morley's sad reply.

"I don't believe one quarter of the men in the House understand it so," answered M'Carthy.

It was true. There were no fireworks, there were no tableaux, there was no melodramatic fall of the curtain. When all was over, he just rose and walked out with springy steps by his usual pathway behind the Speaker's chair.

## CHAPTER XXX.

### *AS SCHOLAR AND ORATOR.*

"From the lore of bards and sages old,  
From whatsoever my waking thoughts create  
Out of the hopes of thine aspirings bold,  
Have I collected language to unfold  
Truth to my countrymen."—SHELLEY.

THE very day that Mr. Gladstone took leave for ever of his colleagues in Cabinet Council, he returned home

to put the finishing touches to his translation of the "Odes of Horace." It was this feeling for scholarship and literary work that enabled him to keep his marvellous vitality. It was the change from politics to book-making, and from bookmaking to politics, that made his life so full of interest and freshness. He was once asked the secret of his wondrous vitality, and quaintly answered: "There was a road leading out of London on which more horses died than on any other. Inquiry revealed the fact that it was perfectly level; consequently, the animals travelling over it used only one set of muscles."

His contributions to literature, extending over sixty years, are prodigious in quantity. His earliest efforts appeared in *The Eton Miscellany*, when he wrote under the pseudonym "Bartholomew Bouverie." His first serious book was "The State in its Relations with the Church," which still remains the most valuable of his works, though one called "The Vatican Decrees" ran through a hundred and ten editions.

His "Studies on Homer," contained in three large volumes, were published in 1858. As the work of one of our finest orators and greatest statesmen, they were altogether wonderful. Mr. Gladstone did not take up his Homer as a plaything, not even as a mere literary enjoyment. To him the study of this prince of poets was a means by which himself and other men might become better and wiser. He has "done such justice to Homer and his age as Homer has never received out of his own land."

"Juventus Mundi," a study on gods and men of the heroic age of Greece, was written mainly in the two recesses of 1867 and 1868.

A pamphlet on "Bulgarian Horrors," in 1876, was followed by seven volumes called "Gleanings of Past

Years," which he collected while he was paving the way for the great political triumph of 1880. There was no doubt that the two characters of scholar and statesman did much to help and strengthen each other; the close study of classics must have helped him specially in his capacity as an orator.

His speeches were full of classical allusions and quotations; his vocabulary was full; he had what has been called almost a "dangerous" command of language. He possessed the one great quality in which as a Parliamentary orator he had no rival in our time—that readiness which seems to require no preparation, but can marshal all its arguments as if by instinct at a given moment, and the fluency to pour out the most eloquent language to order.

His voice, indeed, would make the commonplace interesting, and lend something of fascination to dullness itself. It was singularly pure, clear, resonant, and sweet. The orator never seemed to use the slightest effort or strain in filling any hall and reaching the ear of the farthest among his audience. It was not a loud voice or of great volume, but strong, vibrating, and silvery. His words were aided by energetic action and by his deep, gleaming eyes. It is not to be denied that his wonderful gift of words sometimes led him astray, and he would utter words "grave and majestic, but of vague and uncertain import." "Half his acuteness and diligence," says Macaulay, "with a barren imagination and a scanty vocabulary, would have saved him from almost all his mistakes."

Often this superb rush of words added indescribable strength to the eloquence of the speaker. In passages of indignant remonstrance, when word followed word as stroke upon stroke with a wealth of inexhaustible

resource, the very variety and fluency of the speaker fairly overwhelmed his audience. He had no humour. He was always terribly in earnest. Whether the subject were great or small, he threw his whole soul into it. Some of his images were splendid. The language does not contain a more magnificent one than that in which he likens a strong nation of peace to a great man-of-war lying calm and motionless till the moment for action comes, when it "puts forth all its beauty and its bravery, collects its scattered elements of strength, and awakens its dormant thunder." Or again, when he compares the service done to Christendom by the Balkan States to a shelving beach, itself desolated and made barren by the incessant beating of the waves, but shielding the land that lies behind.

Time after time his eloquence turned votes in his favour. In 1873 he made a great speech on the Irish University Bill. Lord Elcho told a friend, as he walked to the House that day, that he intended to vote against the Bill. After the division his friend remarked,—

"I wonder, Elcho, that you could have listened to that speech and voted against the man who made it."

"I listened to the speech," was the answer, "and voted *for* the man who made it."

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## CHAPTER XXXI.

### *EXTRACTS FROM SPEECHES.*

"I only speak right on;  
I tell you that which you yourselves do know."—SHAKESPEARE.

"WHAT, sir, ought a Foreign Secretary to be? Is he to be like some gallant knight at a tournament of old.

pricking forth into the lists, armed at all points, confiding in his sinews and his skill, challenging all-comers for the sake of honour, and having no other duty than to lay as many as possible of his adversaries sprawling in the dust? I do not understand the duty of a Secretary for Foreign Affairs to be of such a character. I understand it to be his duty to conciliate peace with dignity. I think it to be the very first of all his duties studiously to observe, and to exalt in honour among mankind, that great code of principles which is termed the law of nations.....in which I find a great and noble monument of human wisdom, founded on the combined dictates of reason and experience, a precious inheritance bequeathed to us by the generations that have gone before us, and a firm foundation on which we must take care to build whatever it may be our part to add to their acquisitions, if, indeed, we wish to maintain and to consolidate the brotherhood of nations, and to promote the peace and welfare of the world."

"If there be one duty more than another incumbent upon the public men of England, it is to establish and maintain harmony between the past of our glorious history and the future which is still in store for her. I am, if possible, more firmly attached to the institutions of my country than I was when, a boy, I wandered among the sandhills of Seaforth.....But experience has brought with it its lessons. I have learned that there is wisdom in a policy of trust, and folly in a policy of mistrust."

"I shall endeavour—I shall make it my hope—to show that gratitude less by words of idle compliment or hollow flattery than by a manful endeavour, according to the measure of my gifts, humble as they may be, to



render service to a Queen who lives in the hearts of the people, and to a nation, with respect to which I will say that through all posterity, whether it be praised or whether it be blamed, whether it be acquitted or whether it be condemned, it will be acquitted or condemned upon this issue—of having made a good or bad use of the most splendid opportunities; of having turned to proper account, or failed to turn to account, the powers, the energies, the faculties which rank the people of this little island as among the few great nations that have stamped their name and secured their fame among the greatest nations of the world.”

“Get knowledge all you can; and the more you get, the more you breathe upon the nearer heights their invigorating air and enjoy the widening prospect, the more you will know and feel how small is the elevation you have reached in comparison with the immeasurable altitudes that yet remain unscaled. Be thorough in all you do; and remember that, though ignorance often may be innocent, pretension is always despicable. ‘Quit you like men,’ be strong; and the exercise of your strength to-day will give you more strength to-morrow. Work onwards and work upwards. And may the blessing of the Most High soothe your cares, clear your vision, and crown your labours with reward!”

“I have spoken, and I must speak, in very strong terms indeed of the acts done by my opponents; but I will never ascribe those acts to base motives. I will never say they do them from vindictiveness; I will never say they do them from passion; I will never say they do them from a sordid love of office. I have no right to use such words; I have no right to entertain

such sentiments; I repudiate and abjure them. I give them credit for patriotic motives; I give them credit for those patriotic motives which are so incessantly and gratuitously denied to us. I believe that we are all united—indeed, it would be most unnatural if we were not—in a fond attachment, perhaps in something of a proud attachment, to the great country to which we belong—to this great empire, which has committed to it a trust and a function given from Providence as special and as remarkable as ever was entrusted to any portion of the family of man. Gentlemen, when I speak of that trust and that function, I feel that words fail me. I cannot tell you what I think of the nobleness of the inheritance that has descended upon us, of the sacredness of the duty of maintaining it. I will not condescend to make it a part of controversial politics. It is a part of my being, of my flesh and blood, of my heart and soul. For these ends I have laboured through my youth and manhood till my hairs are grey. In that faith and practice I have lived; in that faith and practice I will die.”

“When I look at the inscription which faces me on yonder gallery, I see the words ‘Peace, Retrenchment, and Reform.’ All of these words are connected with the promotion of human happiness; and what some would call the desert of this world, and of the political world in particular, would be an arid desert indeed if we could not hope that our labours are addressed to the increase of human happiness—that we try to diminish the sin and sorrow in the world, to do something to reduce its grievous and overwhelming mass, to alleviate a little the burden of life for some, to take out of the way of struggling excellence those impediments at least which

the folly or the graver offence of man has offered as obstacles in his progress. These are the hopes that cheer, that ought to cheer, the human heart amidst the labours and struggles of public life."

"We are comrades in a common undertaking; we are fellow-soldiers in a common warfare; we have a very serious labour to perform. The people of this country, and you among them in your place, have to consider what is the system upon which such an empire ought to be governed. It is a subject on which I for one have a strong opinion known to you. We should endeavour to bring about a great and fundamental change in regard to those dangerous novelties which have of late been introduced into the policy of this country, which have disturbed the world at large, and which have certainly aggravated the distress of the nation at home. I believe that in our efforts to do away with that system and to return to the sound Liberal and just principles that have commonly distinguished in our time British administration, we have in our charge a cause which is the cause of peace, which is the cause of justice, which is the cause of liberty, which is the cause of honour, and which, in the hands of the people of this country, by the blessing of God, will not fail."

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## CHAPTER XXXII.

### *A GIFT TO THE NATION.*

"The mind that thought for Britain's weal."—SCOTT.

MR. GLADSTONE'S retirement from political life was now final. In the following May he underwent an operation

on one eye for cataract, which was quite successful, and enabled him once more to enjoy his reading. Besides being engaged in editing the theological works of Bishop Butler, working sometimes as much as ten hours at a stretch, he had made up his mind to bequeath to the nation a vast number of his theological books, and this entailed a great deal of work. Throughout the years of his long life he had collected some very rare books; but they had overflowed his library at Hawarden. So he now determined to build a library not far off, which



ST DEINIOL'S LIBRARY, HAWARDEN.

should be open to all theological students, and to arrange, by means of a hostel, for their board and lodging while engaged in their work.

Weeding out these books was no light task. Cartload after cartload left the Temple of Peace, to be rearranged in the newly-built library, called St. Deiniol's, after the Welsh patron saint.

"But do you not miss the thousands of books you have sent down into St. Deiniol's Library?" people would ask him.

"Yes, I do miss them," was the old man's answer;

"I miss them every day and every hour. When I want a book, it is sure to be at St. Deiniol's."

The answer was made in a tone of playful grumbling, but it was pathetic in its love for the books he was thus giving away even during his lifetime.

This Iron Library, built by Mr. Gladstone, stands on the breezy hill-top of Hawarden, just above the Parish Church. Inside, it is arranged in the same way as the Temple of Peace: there are windows on either side of the long room; between these are high bookcases running toward the centre of the room. Here are the same simplicity, the same quiet comfort, the same atmosphere of repose that characterize Mr. Gladstone's own library at the Castle.

The "Divinity Room" leads on to the "Humanity Room," which contains secular books. Here are foreign authors and poets, biography, history, travel, fiction; here also are many presents, such as pictures, caskets, albums, chairs, and paper-knives, given to Mr. Gladstone on various occasions by political friends and disciples. Five small studies are set apart for students who prefer to work in solitude. And for the sake of those who live at a distance there is the little old hostel within a stone's-throw. It is a square, two-storied little brick house, with nooks and corners, and cheerful, cosy rooms, where students, curates, and authors may dwell at twenty-five shillings a week. The warden of both hostel and library is Mr. Drew.

And so the evening of his days passed away in quiet enjoyment of his home and his family.

Of his four sons, the eldest, William Henry, had sat in the House of Commons as member for Whitby; but being a man of gentle and retiring disposition, he did



not take kindly to the turmoil of politics, and when the opportunity presented itself he gladly withdrew. He died several years before his father, leaving several sons—the eldest, William Glynne Charles, being heir to the Hawarden estate.

Mr. Gladstone's second son, Stephen, is rector of Hawarden.

His third son, Henry, has followed the family traditions by entering upon commercial pursuits.

Mr. Herbert Gladstone, the youngest of the four, is the only one who has followed in his father's footsteps and become a politician. For some years he acted as private secretary to his father, though he received no salary. He became in succession a Lord of the Treasury and Financial Secretary to the War Office. Upon his father's retirement in 1894, the colleagues who had long worked with Mr. Herbert Gladstone made haste to do him fuller justice, promoting him to the position of First Commissioner of Works.

Of his three daughters, one is married to Mr. Drew; another to Mr. Wickham, headmaster of Wellington College, and now Dean of Lincoln; while the third, Miss Helen Gladstone, was for some time Principal of Newnham College, Oxford.

This is a modest record for the family of a man four times Premier of England, with sees and preferments to give away—happy in keeping around him those he loved best. This he proclaimed on the occasion of his golden wedding in 1889, when, outside the village, the horses of his carriage had been taken out and thirty picked men from the Hawarden estate had drawn it triumphantly to the Castle.

"Our children have never been governed at any period by force," he then said, turning to address the

crowds. "We have had faith in the principles of love and of mutual attachment, and we have received in their conduct our richest reward."

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## CHAPTER XXXIII.

*THE END.*

"Yet the strong man must go;  
For the journey is done and the summit attained,  
And the barriers fall."—BROWNING.

EIGHTEEN years ago Mr. Gladstone wrote on the fly-leaf of his journal: "For my part, my sole concern is to manage the third and last act of my life with decency, and to make a handsome exit off the stage." The "third and last act" of that drama had now been reached; the long life was drawing to its close.

The autumn of 1897 found him suffering a good deal of pain in his face. It was thought advisable for him to winter abroad, and his old friend Lord Rendel at once placed his villa at Cannes at his disposal. But the sunshine and the blue Mediterranean failed to restore his now-failing health as they had done before. From time to time uneasy rumours circulated. Now it was too cold for his daily drive; now he could no longer read, he was writing nothing; and those who had watched the energetic career of the now veteran statesman felt that his strength must indeed be failing, if he had to give up his favourite pursuits. Now news leaked out that he was suffering great pain, and all political differences of opinion were merged in pity for the man who, after a long life of work and toil, must now win his rest through nights and days of weariness.

A visit to Bournemouth in midwinter again failed to

give relief, and in March 1898 he returned home to Hawarden—to die. “With Hawarden, if it please God, my last acquaintance with the light and with the air is likely to be connected,” he had said in a recent speech. This wish was now to be fulfilled.

To the crowds who tried to catch a last glimpse of him on his journey, he turned in his pain, and with an attempt at cheerfulness he said, “God bless you all, and this place, and the land you love!”

“And God bless *you*, sir!” was the muttered prayer of the people as he passed from their sight for ever.

His old interest in life now began to pale.

“There is no reason why you should not live another ten years,” said a friend to him cheerily.

“God save me from so cruel a fate!” was the pathetic answer.

From the dignity and silence that now surrounded Hawarden Castle one touching little story crept out.

A little black Pomeranian, called Petz, had for the past nine years been the constant and faithful companion of Mr. Gladstone in all his walks and drives about Hawarden. Up to the time that his master left for Cannes Petz was happy and well. The Castle becoming very quiet after Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone’s departure, Petz went to stay with Mr. and Mrs. Drew, and his special friend Dorothy Drew. But with his master’s departure Petz’s joyous spirit seemed to have left him. Again and again he ran back to Hawarden, and refused to be comforted. At last he refused his food, and became ill and low. On the day of Mr. Gladstone’s return he was taken back to the Castle. But it was too late; he just lived to see his master again, and a few days later little Petz died.

As the cold spring months passed on, Mr. Gladstone grew worse. “I am dead to this world, dead to all

public questions," he said constantly during those long, suffering days; and again, "I am waiting, only waiting."

With an heroic and uncomplaining patience he bore his pain, though it was "wellnigh intolerable."

"The greatest churchman of our day lies at Hawarden, with masterful eyes almost closed, stricken and bruised, with the strength of an old lion, as it were, sore wounded. He needs all the nation's prayers, for the days go hard with him," said Canon Scott Holland at St. Paul's—words which found an echo in every heart.

As the day was breaking to usher in Ascension morning, Mr. Gladstone passed quietly away. They carried him into his "Temple of Peace," and there, in his scarlet robes, he lay at rest amid the books he had loved with such passionate fondness.

All rivalries disappeared, all feuds were suppressed, all hatreds forgotten, in the universal wish of the nation that he should lie among the greatest and the best in Westminster Abbey. Thither accordingly he was borne, honoured by the presence of the highest in the land, followed by friends and foes, now united in a common bond of feeling, amid a dignified and respectful silence.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### *THE NATION'S LOSS.*

"A splendid image built of man has flown;  
His deeds inspired of God outstep a Past.  
Ours the great privilege to have had one  
Among us who celestial tasks has done."

G. MEREDITH ON GLADSTONE.

MR. GLADSTONE has passed away, and the whole civilized world is the poorer—how much the poorer none can say.

"You will never know," said Canon Liddon, "none of us will ever know, how great Mr. Gladstone is. We shall never be able to measure him until he is gone."

These words were prophetic; now they are true.

It is impossible even to foreshadow the place that history shall allot to Mr. Gladstone.

"I sometimes think," said Mr. Chamberlain in 1885, "that great men are like great mountains, and that we do not appreciate their magnitude while we are still close to them. You have to go to a distance to see which peak it is that towers above its fellows; and it may be that we shall have to put between us and Mr. Gladstone a space of time before we shall know how much greater he was than any of his competitors for fame and power. I am certain that justice will be done to him in the future; and I am not less certain that there will be a signal condemnation of the men who, moved by motives of party spite, in their eagerness for office, have not hesitated to load with insult and indignity the greatest statesman of our time." And he adds these words, to which recent events have added untold pathos: "He, with his great magnanimity, can afford to forget and forgive these things."

It is impossible to believe that a man who was thirteen times Chancellor of the Exchequer—who found the gross annual national expenditure at fifty-five and a half millions a year, and left it at eighty-five millions—who found the Customs Tariff loaded with nearly five hundred duties, and left it with less than fifty—should not, on this alone, take a high place among financiers of the world.

It is impossible to believe that a man who was four times Prime Minister of England—under whom such tremendous reforms as the Irish Land Act, the Elemen-



tary Education Act, the Abolition of the Paper Duty, the Franchise and Local Government Acts, were prominent—should not rank with the highest of the world's statesmen.

It is impossible to believe that, as a man alone, in his strong individuality, God-fearing, justice-loving, serious-minded, he should not live long in the hearts of those Englishmen who shall yet succeed William Ewart Gladstone.

His loss to the nation is well described in these lines, which compare him to an old oak in the forest:—

“ His feet laid hold of the marl and earth, his head was in the sky ;  
He had seen a thousand bulb and burst, he had seen a thousand die ;  
And none knew when he began to be—of trees that grew on the ground—  
Lord of the wood, King of the oaks, Monarch of all around.

“ And towering so high over others, the wind in his branches roared ;  
Yet never a limb did the tempest break, or shatter a bough that soared ;  
Only the ripe young acorns it flung to the earth at his knees,  
And they sprang up themselves in their season, a belt of protecting trees.

“ But at length, when the storms were over, and still was the forest dell,  
Unbattered, unbeaten, unbroken, he bowed himself and fell ;  
And the breadth of that mighty clearing, when the giant had gone from  
his place,

Was like to the scene of a hundred oaks in the waste of its empty space.” \*

\* By kind permission of Mr. Hall Caine.

THE END.







